CORPSE PRINCESS

YOSHIICHI AKAHITO

CORPSE PRINCESS

KALI (NAME)

The Hindu goddess of destruction and slaughter, worshiped in India. Her adherents formed a group known as the "Thugs." Based in Calcutta, the Thugs were supposedly taught assassination techniques by Kali herself. They sacrificed tens of thousands of lives in her name over the years until the 19th century, when Great Britain's colonial government in India suppressed the organization, forcing it to dissolve.

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SHE'S GONNA KILL HIM!?
...KILL...
ITSUKI'S GONNA...
WHOOM
...TOMOHARU .....!?
DEATH 38: REMINISCENCE (PART 3)

DEATH 38: REMINISCENCE (PART 3)

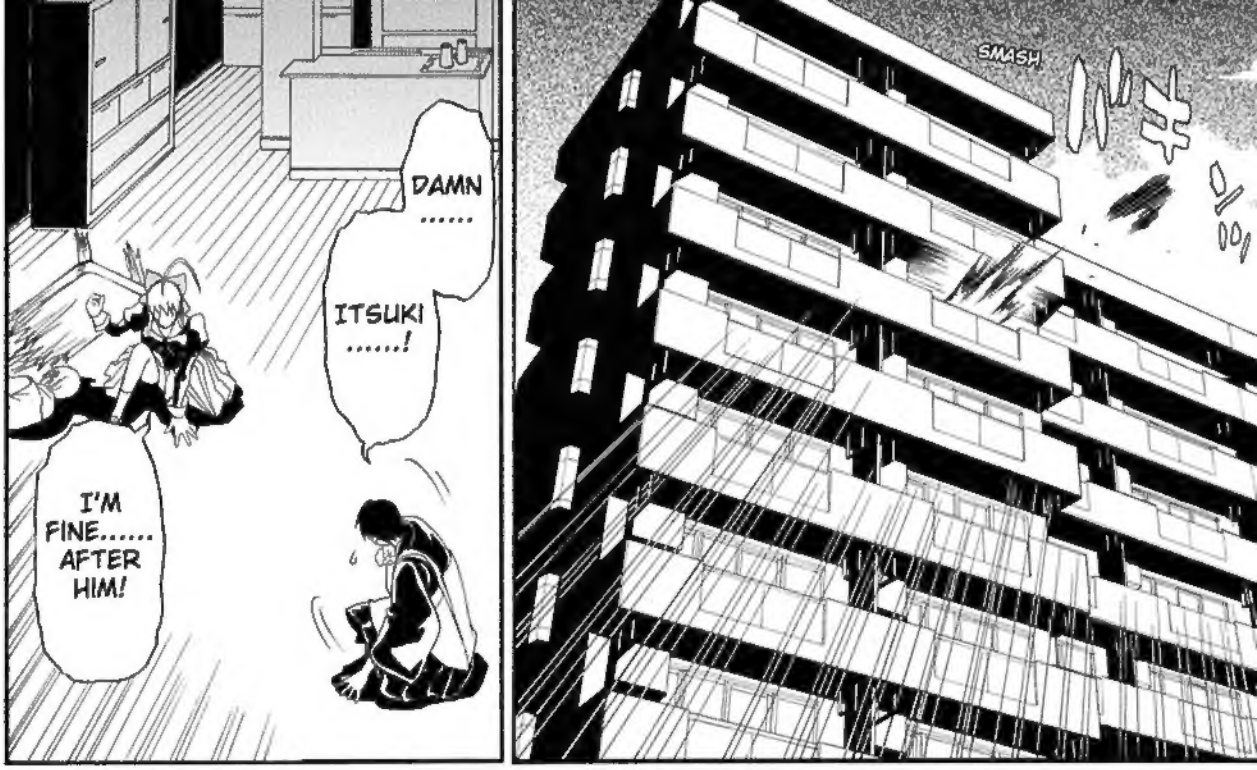
?

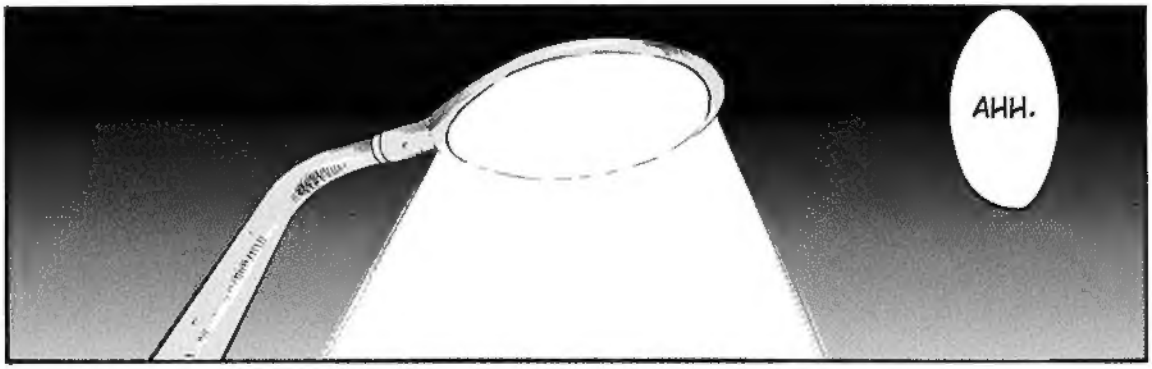
SWAY
I SEE.
HEH. HEH HEH .....

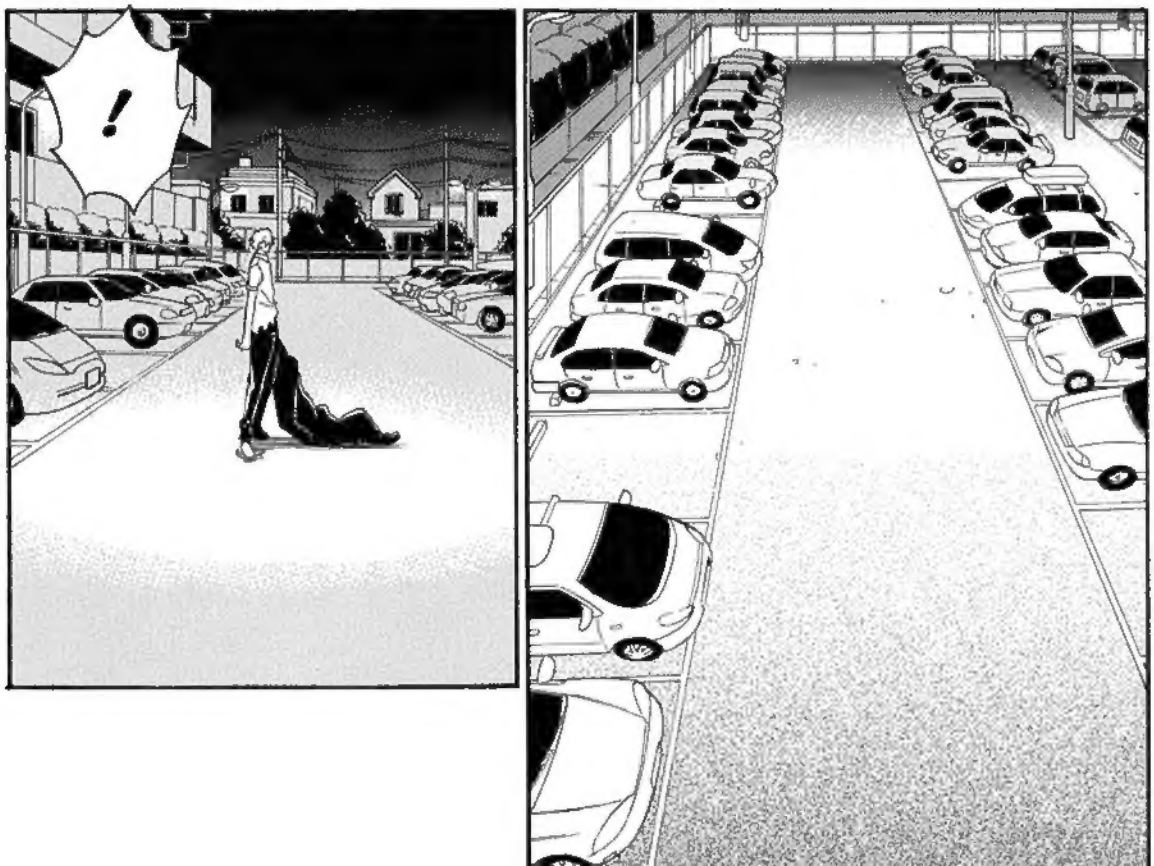
ITSUKI-CHAN..... I KNOW WHAT YOU ARE.....
ALSO ...
I GET IT.
TAKAMASA... I THINK I KNOW WHY YOU'VE COME HERE.
SHIFT
WHAM

!?
THUD
TCH.
GASP
SMASH
!!
ITSUKI
!!

LOOM
JOLT
LEER
TO...
MO...
.....
AH.
POW
!!


DAMN .....
ITSUKI .....!
I'M FINE..... AFTER HIM!
SMASH


AHH.


!

AH...
THIS GUY'S BEEN TAILING ME FOR A WHILE.
SO I CAUGHT HIM..... AND WE HAD A LITTLE CHAT.
DROP
INVES-TIGATOR ?!
!?
I'M A "SHIKABANE" NOW.
..... AS YOU ALREADY KNOW, I'M A CORPSE, REANIMATED BY MY LINGERING REGRETS .....
WHAT HAPPENED TO ME. WHY I'M LIKE THIS.....
CRACK
CRACK
NOW EVERYTHING MAKES SENSE.

...AND THE REASON ...
... FOR THIS RESENTMENT BOILING UP INSIDE OF ME.
TOMO..... HARU.
YOU'RE A BAD DUDE, TAKAMASA.
YOU CAME ALL THIS WAY TO KILL ME NOW THAT I'VE BECOME A SHIKABANE?
DRIP
..... THAT'S RIGHT.
TOMOHARU... THE REGRETS YOU'RE POSSESSED BY GO AGAINST THE NATURAL ORDER. THEY'VE MADE YOU A SHIKABANE .....
THAT'S WHY..... I HAVE TO STOP YOU!
...!
AND YOU'RE USING ITSUKI-CHAN TO DO IT.....

SO YOU GOTTA KILL YOUR BEST BUDDY..... JUST 'COS HE'S A SHIKABANE?
.....
YES .....
!?
THEN..... YOU GONNA KILL ITSUKI-CHAN IN THE END TOO?

YEAH, RIGHT?
SHE'S A CORPSE ANIMATED BY REGRET, JUST LIKE ME.
WH—
WHAT .....?

DRRRR
WHAT'S MORE...
BOTH OF US WERE KILLED BY CARS, AT THAT.
..... SEE?
WE'RE NOT SO DIFFERENT, REALLY.
REV
REV
REV
REV
!!
THOSE CARS! .....!!
REV
REV
REV
HMM .....?
YOU KNOW I'M RIGHT.
ITSUKI-CHAN?

BADUM
SHUDDER
SHAKE
SHAKE
VROOM
VROOM
!!

ITSUKI !!
!!

SMASH

SHOOTING THE TIRES TO ALTER THEIR PATH .....
LEER
NICELY DONE, TAKA-MASA.

FOOM
DOO
.....
CRUNCH
CRUNCH

FOOM
HAA.
HAA.
HAA.

DRRR
DRRR
DRRR
I FOUND MYSELF BROODING... AND RESENTING MY LITTLE "ACCIDENT" MORE AND MORE.
AND THEN I LEARNED I COULD USE CARS TO CAUSE MY OWN ACCIDENTS.
HONESTLY... IT'S PRETTY WILD.

RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
SCREECH
SCREECH
REV
TURN
AND I'LL MAKE SURE THE HUMANS OF THIS WORLD WILL FEEL MY REGRETS TOO!
I CAN'T HELP WANTING TO MAKE THEM FEEL THE SAME PAIN AND HATRED I DO!

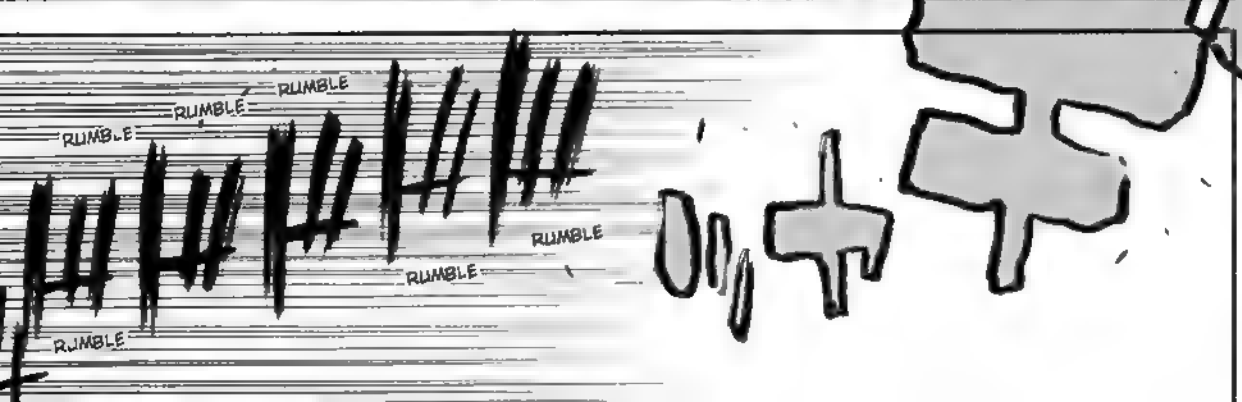
!!
FOOM
SCREECH
SCREECH
SCREECH
SIX REALMS EXORCISM !!
FWIP
FWIP
TCH!!
SEALED MANDALA !!
TCH .....
DRAG
BURST
BURST
SKID
SKID
SKID
SKID
SKID

HAHA!
TOO BAD FOR YOU, TAKAMASA.
YOUR CORPSE PRINCESS IS SCARED STIFF AND TOTALLY USELESS.
AND YOU'RE HAVING A HARD TIME TAKING ACTION TOO.
NOT TO MENTION .....
THESE FLAMES'RE GONNA START ATTRACTING ATTENTION.
SWIRL
SWIRL
SWIRL
..... TCH.
BUT ...
I'M JUST GETTING STARTED.
SWIRL
SWIRL
THESE REGRETS OF MINE JUST WON'T DIE.

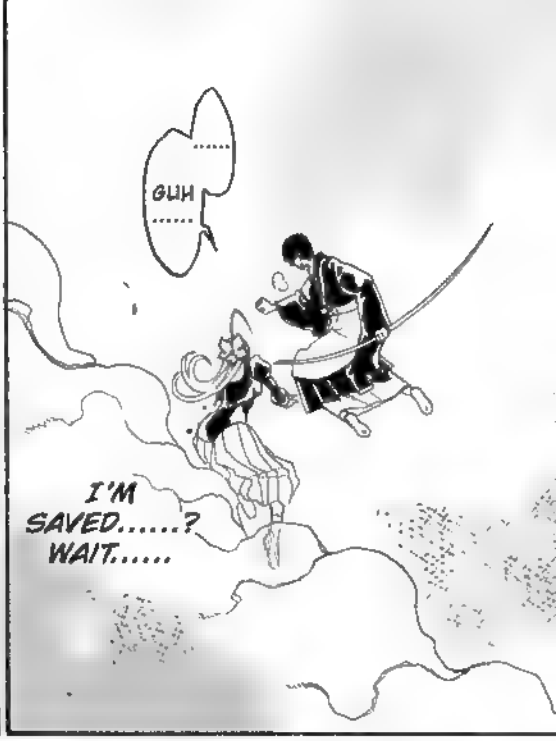
BEEP
SMASH
A TRACTOR-TRAILER!? WITH THE DRIVER..... STILL INSIDE.....
WHAT DO I DO!?

SAID

CRASH
危


RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE

SHE PUSHED ME.....!!
!!
ITSU... KI.


.....
GUH
.....
I'M SAVED.....? WAIT.....

HAA.
BAM
HAA
SPLURT
HAA.

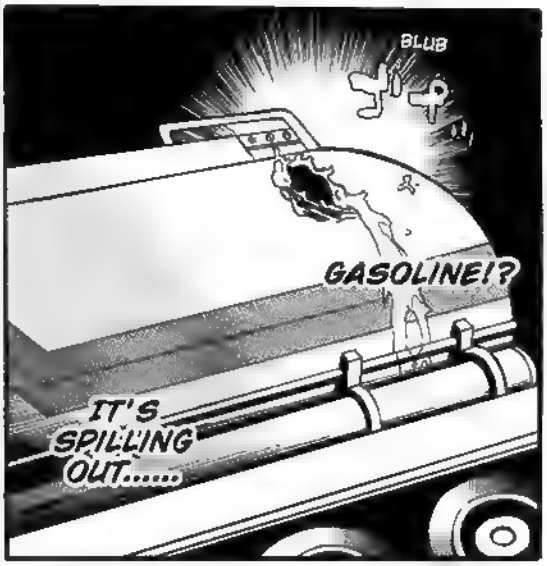
...TAKA-MASA..... YOU'D HAVE DIED.....
...IF I HADN'T .....

S—
SORRY, TAKA-MASA .....
DRIP
DRIP
..... BUT ...

TCH !!
TURN
.....!
!
POP
.....!! GAHH...
SPLORT
HEY !!
YOU!! HELP M—
GRUEL!

TOMOHARU!!
FWIP
GUSH
YANK
!!
.....
JUST BECAUSE I'M A SHIKABANE ?
YOU'LL KILL YOUR BEST FRIEND?
..... REALLY, TAKAMASA ?
YOU'RE REALLY GONNA KILL ME?

ITSUKI ……!
FWIP
……


BLUB
GASOLINE!?
IT'S SPILLING OUT……

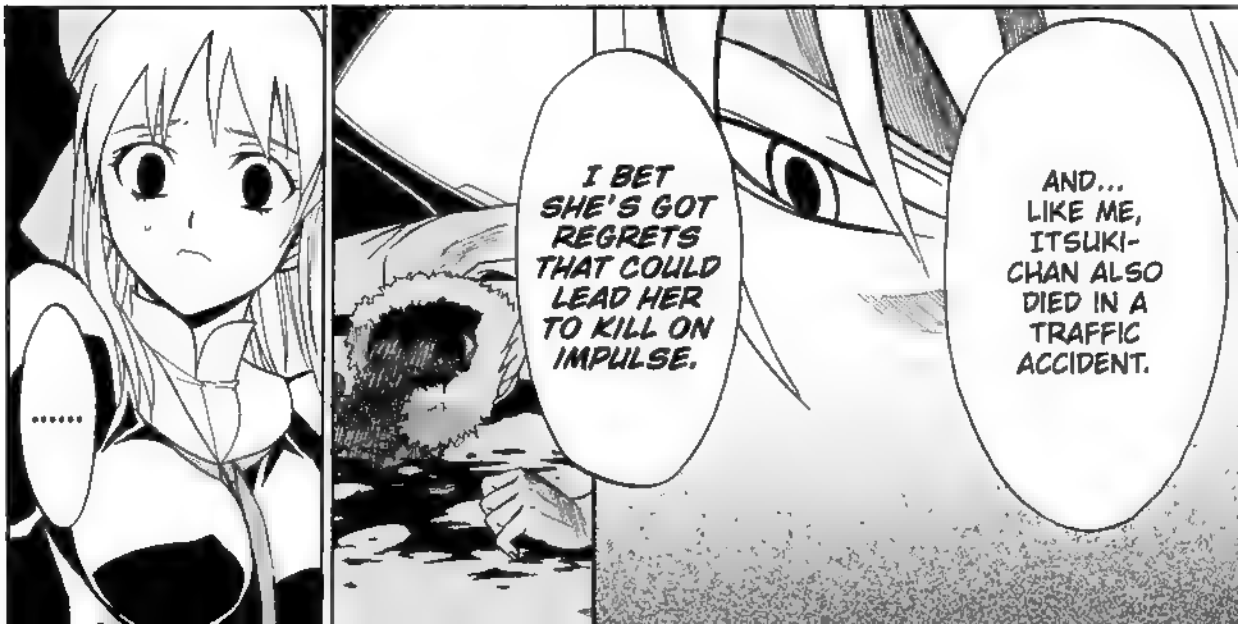
DON'CHA THINK IT'S UNFAIR, ITSUKI-CHAN?
HEH ……

JUST 'COS I'M A SHIKABANE AND YOU'RE A CORPSE PRINCESS !!
STILL…… NOW I'M THE ONLY ONE TAKAMASA'S TRYING TO KILL!

WE'RE BOTH CLOSE TO TAKAMASA. WE WERE BOTH HUMAN.
…… EH?

WRONG !!
ITSUKI, SHE..... CORPSE PRINCESSES EXIST TO PROTECT HUMANS FROM SHIKABANE !!
SHE DOESN'T KILL PEOPLE OUT OF REGRET !!
FWIP
HEH EH.
YOU..... REALLY BELIEVE THAT?

WHAT'RE YOU.....
SHIKABANE ARE THE DEAD THAT CAN'T QUITE DIE, TAKAMASA.
THERE'S NOTHING ORDINARY ABOUT REGRETS THAT CAN MAKE THAT POSSIBLE.


AND... LIKE ME, ITSUKI-CHAN ALSO DIED IN A TRAFFIC ACCIDENT.
I BET SHE'S GOT REGRETS THAT COULD LEAD HER TO KILL ON IMPULSE.
.....

!?
HEH-EH ……IT MAKES ME SAD, TAKAMASA.
THAT SO?
SHE'S NO MURDERER ……
DIDN'T YOU FEEL FOR ME AT ALL?
WHEN ME AND MY FAMILY WERE KILLED IN THAT ACCIDENT ?
I HAD MY FAMILY AND FUTURE STOLEN AWAY.
I WAS MAD…… FURIOUS ……
IT'S ONLY NATURAL.
STOMP
I……
……!

IT'S ONLY NATURAL THAT I'D END UP LIKE THIS.
AND WHAT'S WORSE— MY KILLER GOT AWAY SCOT-FREE.
MY OWN LIFE TOO.
RIGHT!? AM I RIGHT, TAKAMASA !?
AND NOW YOU'RE GONNA KILL ME? IS THAT IT!?
IS THAT WHAT YOU REALLY WANT !?

BADUM
DON'T WAVER!!
NO, IT ISN'T .....
BUT .....
.....!

ONCE YOU FINISH YOUR TRAINING AND COME HOME
..THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO TELL YOU.
THAT'S WHY
I'VE... NEVER BEEN MORE GRATEFUL FOR ONE OF MY SCREW-UPS.
DON'T ANY PAY MIND TO THE WORDS OF A SHIKABANE !!
..... BUT...
IF ITSUKI WERE TO BE TAKEN FROM ME.....

TCH!
TAKA-MASA .....!
ニヤ
GRIN

CRACK

HEH.....
GOT YOU.

.....
WELL...

...WHATEVER LED TO THIS, IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER ANYMORE.

HEH.....
GOT YOU.

CRACK
.....
WELL...
...WHATEVER LED TO THIS, IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER ANYMORE.

SLAM
SPIN
SPIN
BLUB
.....
AH?
!!
!!
SLAM

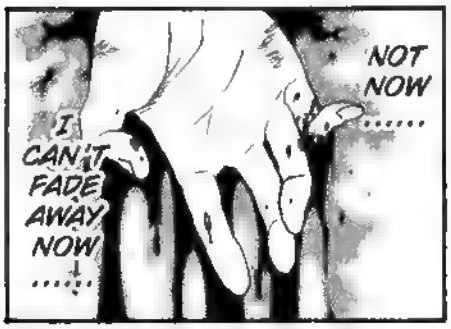
FOOM
STRAIN
STRAIN
UGH
.....
.....
TCH
...
CRAWL
FSSHH
THUNK
THUNK
RIP
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
AHHHHH!
UWAHHH!!!

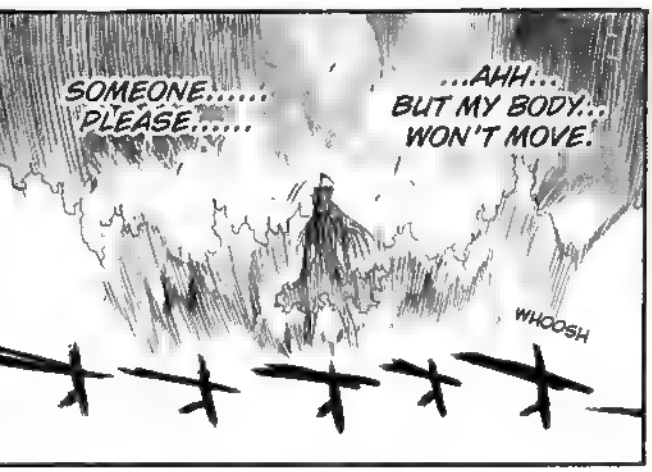
BLAM
HA-HA
.....
HA-HA-
HA-HA-
HA-HA
.....
GYA-HA-
HA-HA-
HA-HA-
HA!!!

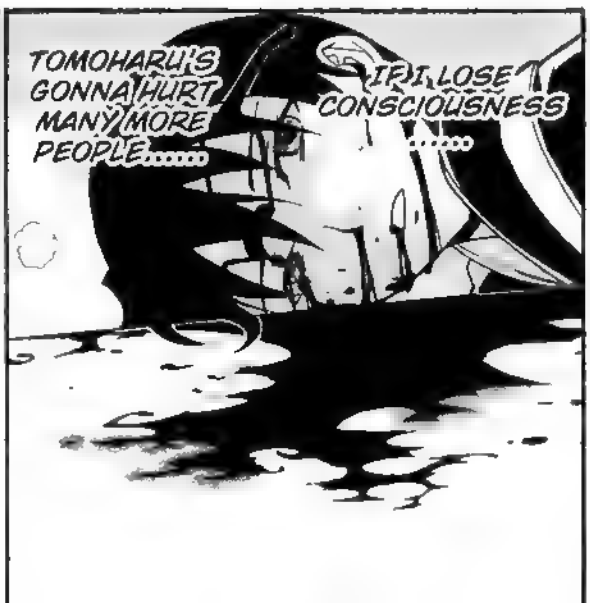
WHOOSH
AHH.....
HAHAHA
HAHAHA

.....I GOTTA STAND.

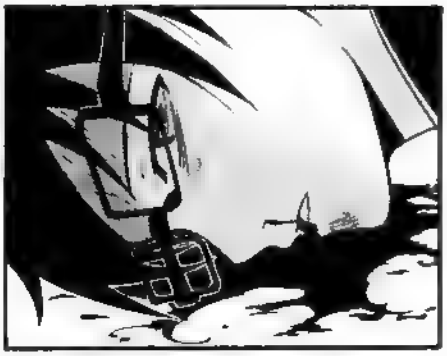
—LIKE THEY'RE HAPPENING IN ANOTHER WORLD .....
SO FAR OFF..... THOSE SOUNDS... THE LIGHTS .....


NOT NOW .....
I CAN'T FADE AWAY NOW ↓ .....


SOMEONE..... PLEASE.....
...AHH... BUT MY BODY... WON'T MOVE.
WHOOSH


TOMOHARU'S GONNA HURT MANY MORE PEOPLE.....
IF I LOSE CONSCIOUSNESS .....

GUESS YOU STILL HAVE REGRETS, THEN.....?
..... TENA-CIOUS, HUH.



HAA.
HAA
...
FOOM
CRACKLE
IPA
IPA
CRACKLE
BURN

!
WHOOSH

YOU'RE LOOKING MORE AND MORE LIKE A SHIKA-BANE.
HEH-EH ...THAT STANCE.

TMP

BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
SLAM!
GAH!?

FWISH
GEH.

REV
REV
REV
SKID
SKID
SKID
SKID
SKID

BOOM
BURST
CRASH
TMP

FOOM

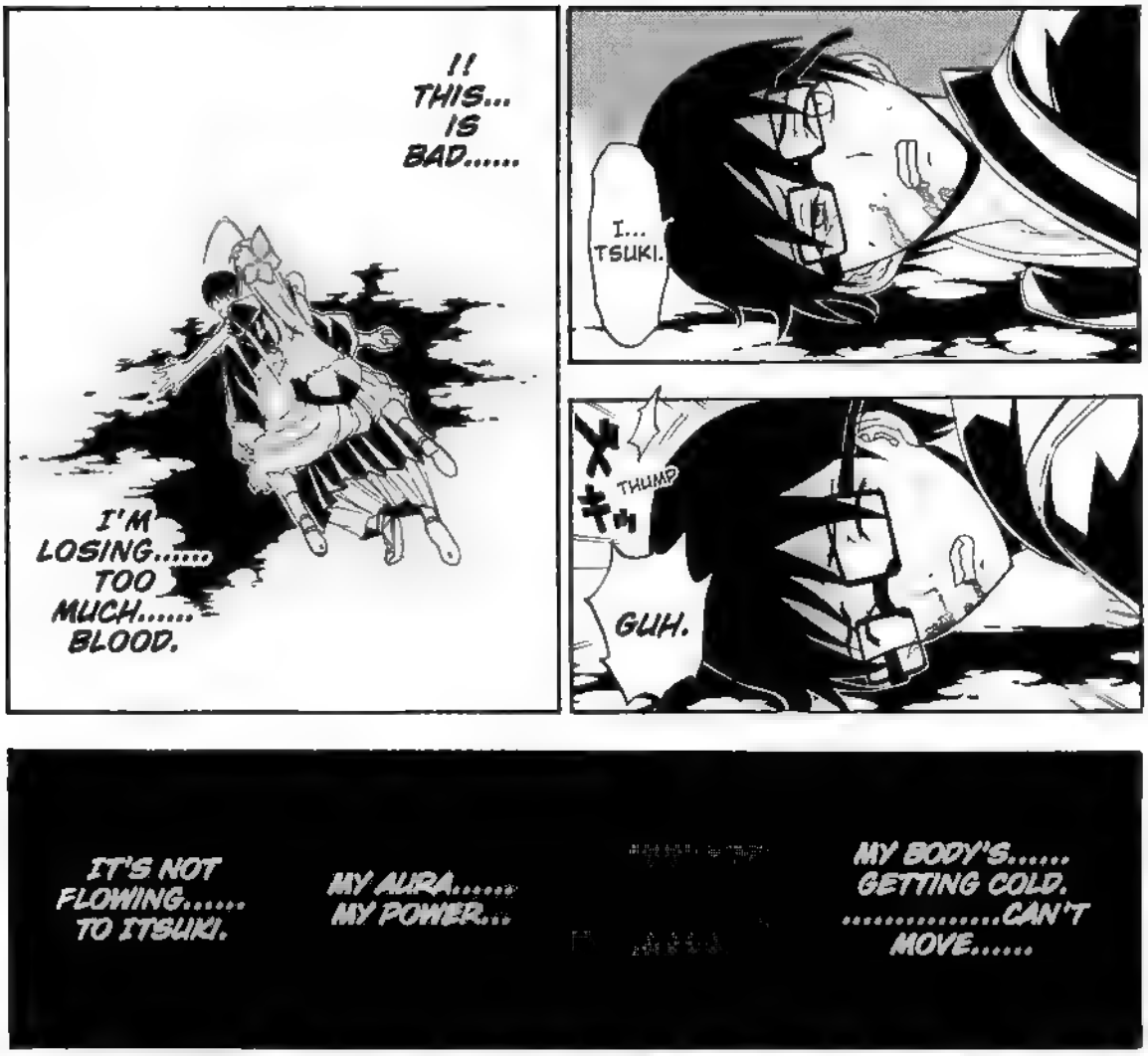
HEH HEH... YES..... YES, I GET IT NOW...
THAT'S WHAT'S KEEPING YOU HERE.

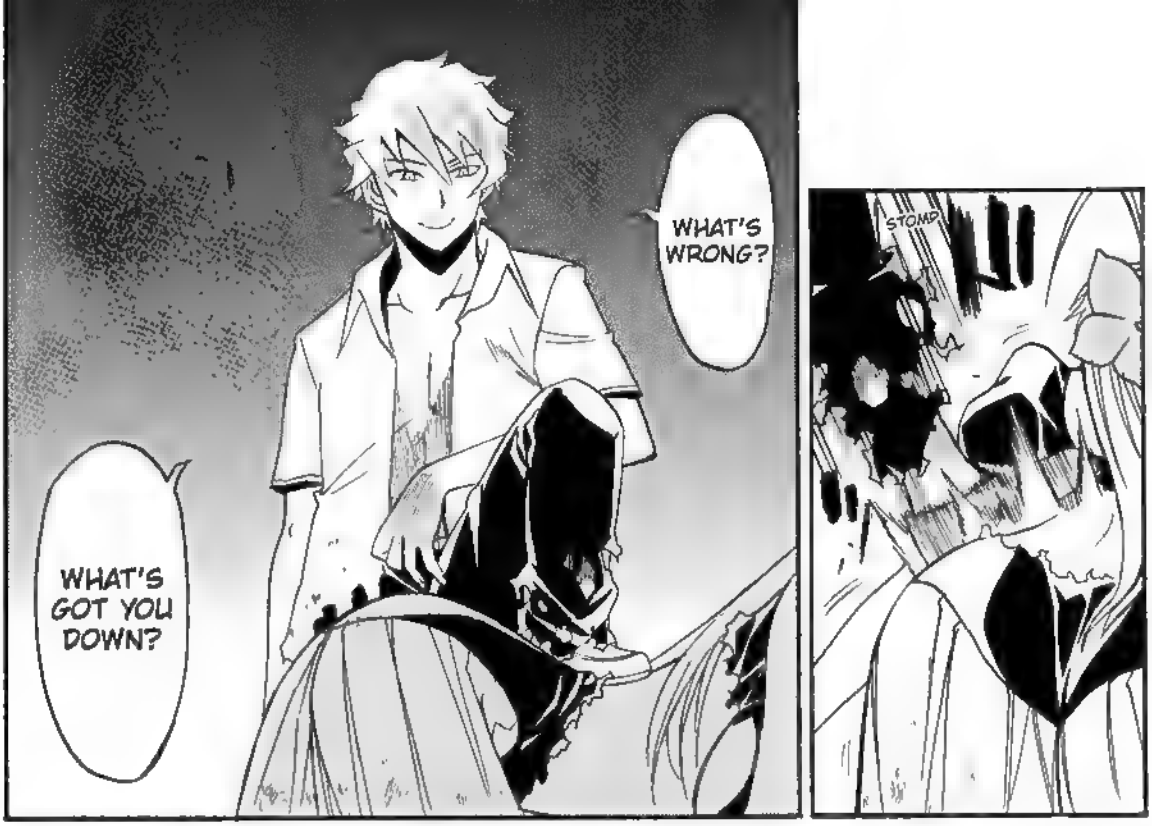
.....
OF COURSE .....

.....
I..... TSUKI.
HAA
HAA

YOUR HOPES FOR THE FUTURE WERE STOLEN BY YOUR ACCIDENT.
YOUR DREAMS AND OBSESSION WITH LOVE AND ROMANCE..... IN OTHER WORDS...
YOUR "REGRET" IS NONE OTHER THAN YOUR ATTACHMENT TO TAKAMASA !!

UH...
DRIP
DRIP
—N'T LOOK.
ITSUKI.
...UH.
STEP
STEP
LOOK AT HER FACE. THE FACE OF THIS PITIFUL..... PATHETIC ABERRATION.
LOOK, TAKAMASA.
...PLEASE .....
...TAKA... MASA.
DON'T LOOK...


!! THIS... IS BAD.....
I'M LOSING..... TOO MUCH..... BLOOD.
I... TSUKI.
THUMP
GUH.
IT'S NOT FLOWING..... TO ITSUKI.
MY AURA..... MY POWER...
MY BODY'S..... GETTING COLD. .....CAN'T MOVE.....
AH... AHHHHH.
NO... NO.....
SHAKE
SHAKE
HAA.
..... AH.
HAA.
AHH.


WHAT'S WRONG?
WHAT'S GOT YOU DOWN?
STOMP

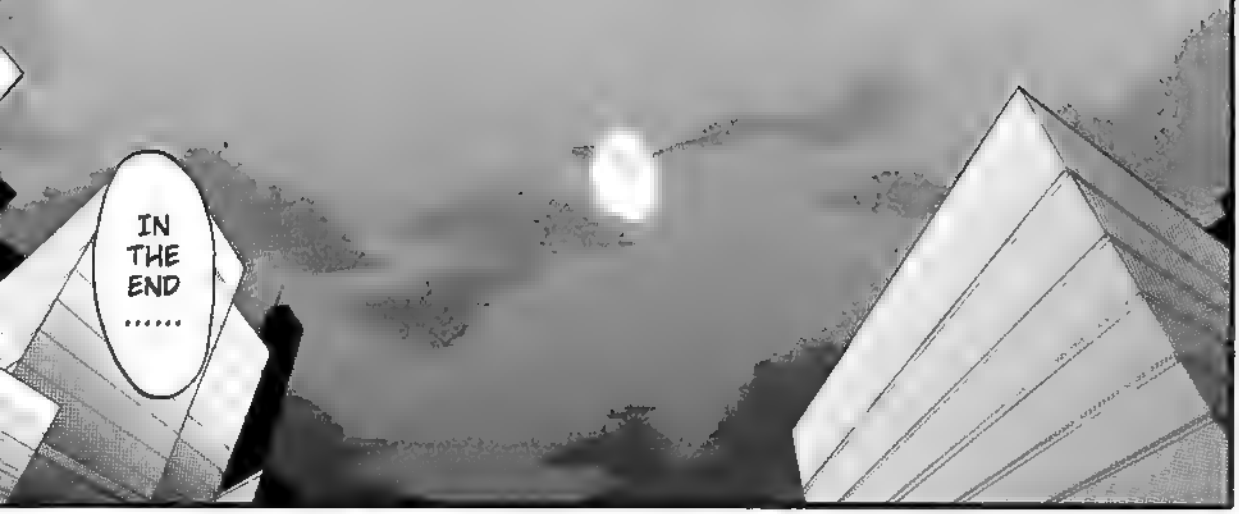
IS IT THAT YOU WERE TOO WEAK? OR THAT YOU'RE GONNA LOSE TO ME?
.....ST—
STOP IT, TOMO... HARU.
OR IS IT THAT TAKAMASA HAD TO SEE THIS UGLY, REGRETFUL SIDE OF YOU?

BUT... WELL...
ISN'T THIS BETTER THAN HIM DYING WITHOUT KNOWING YOUR TRUE FEELINGS?
CLINK
CLINK
FWOOM

BOOM
.....
TCH.
!!
WHOOSH
FWOOM
.....
ACK.
UHH...
UH...

FOOM

NOW..... LET'S END IT.
THIS WAS FUN, TAKAMASA.


IN THE END .....

THE BOY WAS ON THE VERGE OF DEATH FROM HIS WOUNDS..... BUT HIS MASTER ARRIVED IN THE NICK OF TIME TO SAVE HIS LIFE.
AND TOMO-HARU ...
...WAS KILLED BY THE MASTER A FEW HOURS LATER.

THE BOY...
HE'D GOTTEN LOST IN HIS FEELINGS .....AND FAILED TO PROPERLY FIGHT AND PROTECT.
HIS ACTIONS GOT A LOT OF PEOPLE *KILLED*, BEFORE HIS VERY EYES.

ALL HE WANTED ...
...WAS TO SEE HER SMILING FACE, BUT IN THE END, THAT DESIRE.....
...MIGHT AS WELL HAVE KILLED HIM.

WAHHH!
SHOCK
.....DO YOU UNDERSTAND, OURI?
CORPSE PRIN-CESSES ARE.....
IT ALL HAPPENED BECAUSE OF HIS NAÏVETE AND FAILURE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE LIVING AND DEAD ABERRATIONS.

SO..... I NEED TO ASK YOU, OURI.
.....
SHOVE
GLOOP

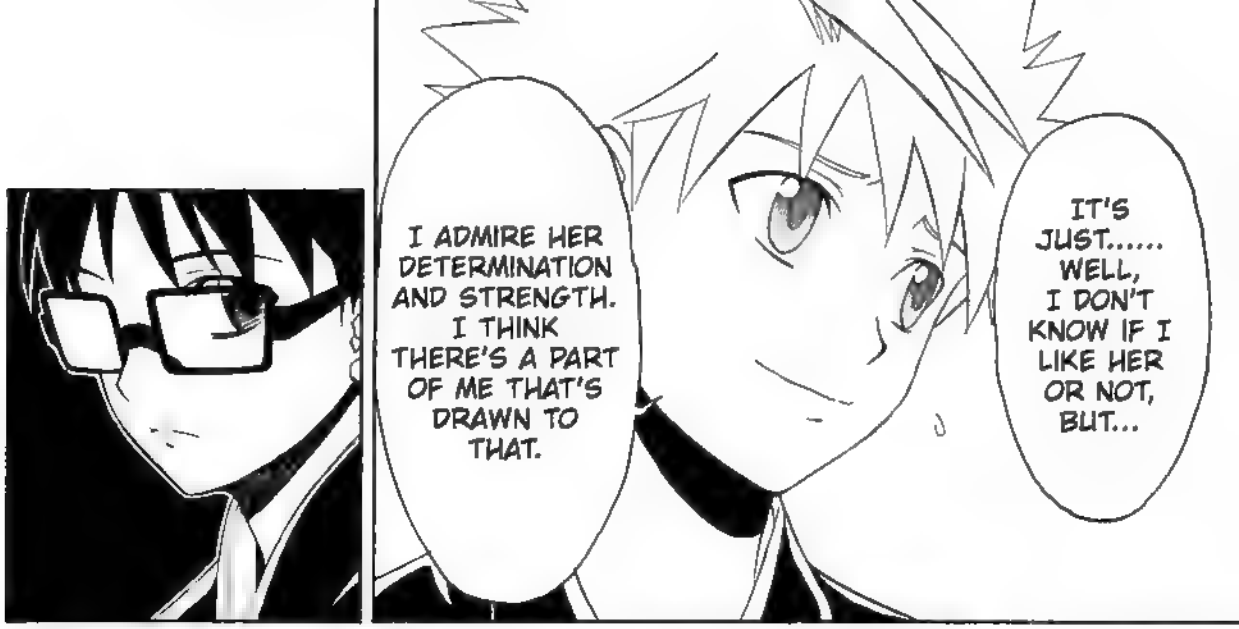
TAKAMASA-SAN... YOU AND ITSUKI-SAN!!
WAY TOO SAD !!
SHO SHAD .....!!
WAHH.
...
YOU FIGURED IT OUT... GUESS IT WASN'T HARD TO...

I KNOW YOU'RE DETERMINED. .....BUT DETERMINATION IS ONE THING.
CORPSE PRINCESSES AREN'T ORDINARY GIRLS. THERE'S AN ASPECT OF DANGER TO THEM.
THE ABERRATION ASPECT.

IN THE PAST, THERE'VE BEEN SOME CONTRACTING MONKS WHO COULDN'T ENDURE THAT AND ENDED UP FLEEING.
THEN THERE ARE SOME WHO, LIKE THE BOY FROM MY STORY, GOT PULLED IN TOO DEEP AND FAILED TO PROTECT WHAT WAS IMPORTANT TO THEM.

EH!!? NO!! NOT AT ALL!! SURE, SHE LOOKS KINDA CUTE WHEN SHE'S SLEEPING, BUT MOST OF THE TIME SHE'S REALLY ANGRY AND SCARY, AND I CAN'T TELL AT ALL WHAT SHE'S THINKING.....
WHAT'S WITH THAT LOOK!?
FLAIL
ばたばた
FLAIL

IT'S NOT LIKE YOU KNEW MAKINA-CHAN BEFORE SHE DIED. SO IS THE REASON YOU'RE SO DEDICATED ...
!!
... BECAUSE YOU VIEW HER AS SOMEONE SPECIAL, JUST AS THE BOY DID?

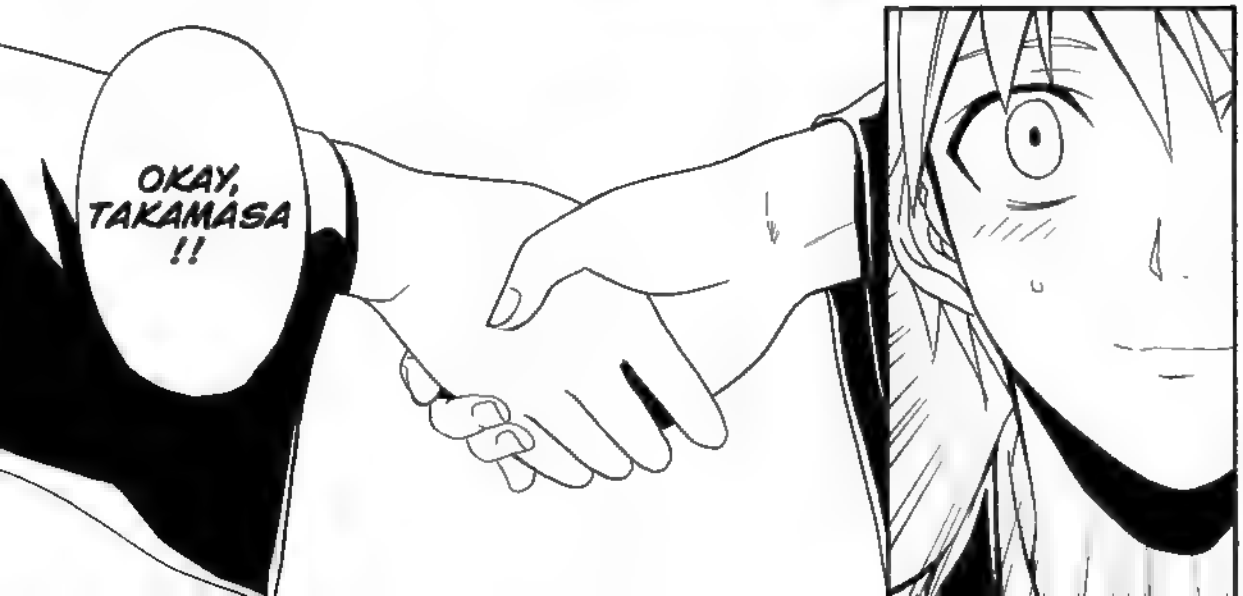

I ADMIRE HER DETERMINATION AND STRENGTH. I THINK THERE'S A PART OF ME THAT'S DRAWN TO THAT.
IT'S JUST..... WELL, I DON'T KNOW IF I LIKE HER OR NOT, BUT...

SO WE'RE BONDED THAT MUCH MORE BY THAT COMMON REGRET.
ME AND HOSHI-MURA-SAN BOTH CARED ABOUT THE SAME PERSON.
IF YOU DON'T COME TO UNDERSTAND THAT, HERE AND NOW
THE SCARS YOU'LL BEAR ARE GOING TO BE A WHOLE LOT WORSE THAN MINE.
MOST OF ALL BECAUSE YOU TWO SHARE THE SAME PAIN. THE SAME REGRETS, EVEN.
THE SAME... PAIN.
ALSO..... I REMEMBER WHAT YOU TOLD ME THAT ONE TIME, BUT.....

OR MAYBE I'M JUST FEELING OPTIMISTIC BECAUSE THE DAI-SOUJOU-SAMA TOLD ME ABOUT MY MIRACULOUS FATE AND UNKNOWABLE POTENTIAL!!
AH-HA-HA.
I SEE.
AS LONG AS I REMEMBER SHE'S GOT THOSE REGRETS IN HER...
...I THINK I'LL BE FINE.

I'M A LITTLE JEALOUS THAT YOU CAN SAY THAT..... BUT I'M ALSO EXCITED TO SEE WHAT YOU BECOME.
OKAY.....! TIME TO HEAD BACK, OURI.
SHOW IT TO ME..... THE PATH I COULDN'T CHOOSE FOR MYSELF.
RIGHT, TAKAMASA-SAN.

OURI.
JUST "TAKAMASA" IS FINE.


OKAY, TAKAMASA !!

9

CORPSE PRINCESS

DEATH 39: ASSAULT

CORPSE PRINCESS PRODUCTION HELPERS:
KATOU-SAN
OOSUMI-SAN
TSUJI-SAN
USAMI-SAN
NIJOU-TSUAN
YOSHIOKA-SAN
YAMAUCHI-SAN
NAKAMURA-SAN

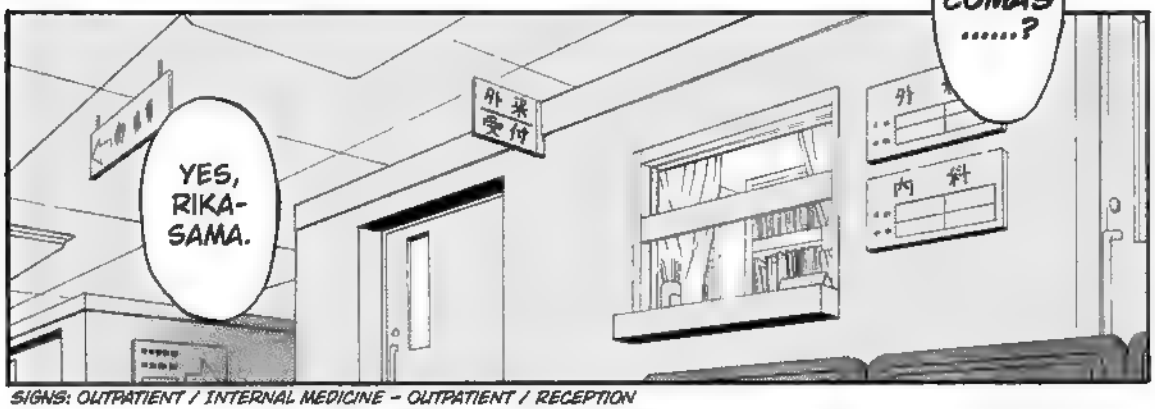
THANKS FOR THE SUPER-GREAT MESSAGES OF SUPPORT FROM GAINAX!!
MURATA (DIRECTOR)
KUBOTA-SAN
SADAKATA-SAN
KOJIMA-SAN

SUPERVISOR:
SHIMIZU

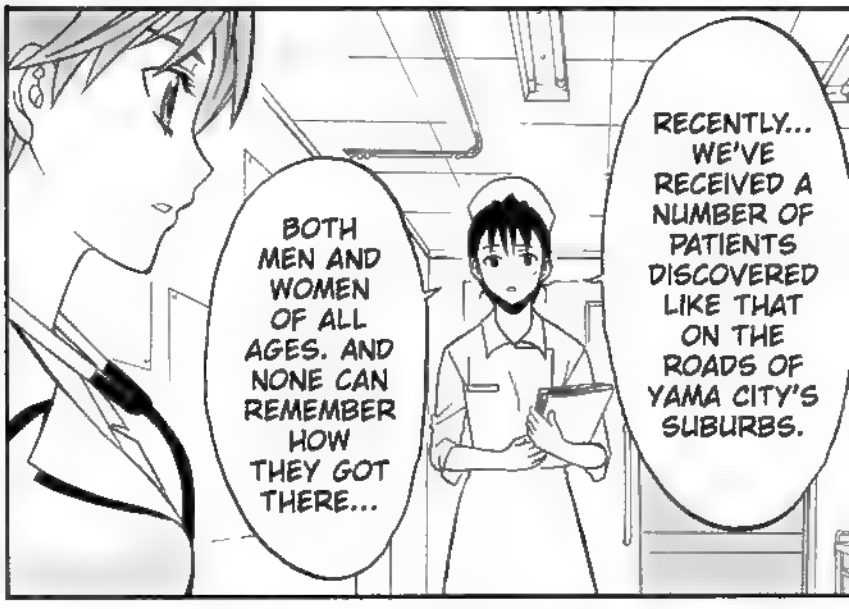
AND THANKS TO ALL THE READERS OUT THERE!

A WINDLESS NIGHT.
FU .....
FUFU .....
BOOM
A HARD NIGHT TO SLEEP THROUGH.
YES, INDEED.
A LOVELY NIGHT..... ...FU... FUFU.
CREEP
PERFECT FOR MY NIGHTMARE.

SIGN: YAMA GENERAL HOSPITAL

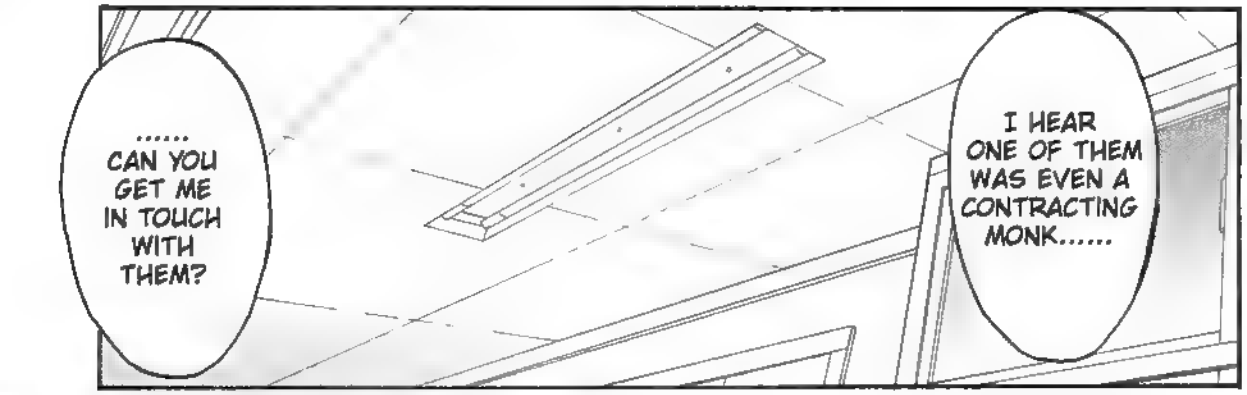


SIGNS: OUTPATIENT / INTERNAL MEDICINE – OUTPATIENT / RECEPTION


BOTH MEN AND WOMEN OF ALL AGES. AND NONE CAN REMEMBER HOW THEY GOT THERE...
RECENTLY... WE'VE RECEIVED A NUMBER OF PATIENTS DISCOVERED LIKE THAT ON THE ROADS OF YAMA CITY'S SUBURBS.

..... CAN I SEE A PATIENT LIST? AND THEIR CHARTS ?
THEY DON'T REACT TO MEDICINE, SO WE SEND THEM HOME.
THEY WAKE UP AFTER A FEW HOURS, AS IF NOTHING WAS WRONG.

PAPER: DIAGNOSIS BRIEF



IS IT.....?
NO, PERHAPS I'M OVERTHINKING THIS...?
.....
RIGHT... OF COURSE .....
.....I CAN TO-MORROW, THOUGH.
YES..... BUT EVERYONE WILL BE AT THE HEAD TEMPLE TODAY.

BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
84
ECHO
HERE.
FRESH BANDAGES.
!
DRIP

...SO WE CAN ONLY GET STRONGER BY POLISHING OUR SKILLS.
SQUEEZE
.....WE CORPSE PRINCESSES CAN NO LONGER GROW PHYSICALLY .....
YOU ALWAYS TRAIN LIKE THIS, HOSHIMURA-SAN?
.....WOW.
YANK
I'M GRATEFUL THAT I GET TO USE THE HEAD TEMPLE'S SHOOTING RANGE.
KACHAK
AND LATELY, I HAVEN'T HAD MUCH TIME TO SPARE FOR TRAINING.
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
.....WELL?

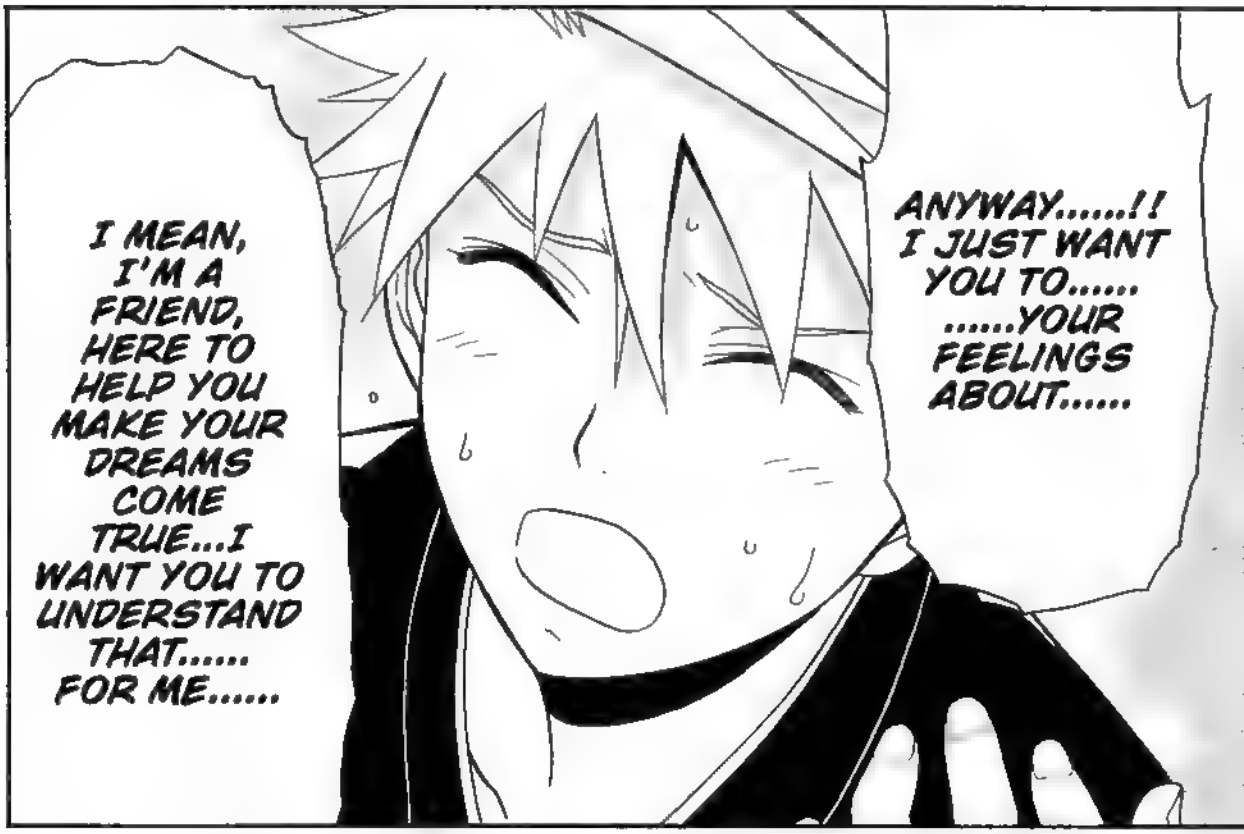
YEAH.
.....MY THOUGHTS HAVEN'T CHANGED.
BOOM
BOOM
DID YOU HAVE SOMETHING ELSE TO SAY?
..... ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED EARLIER TODAY?
BOOM

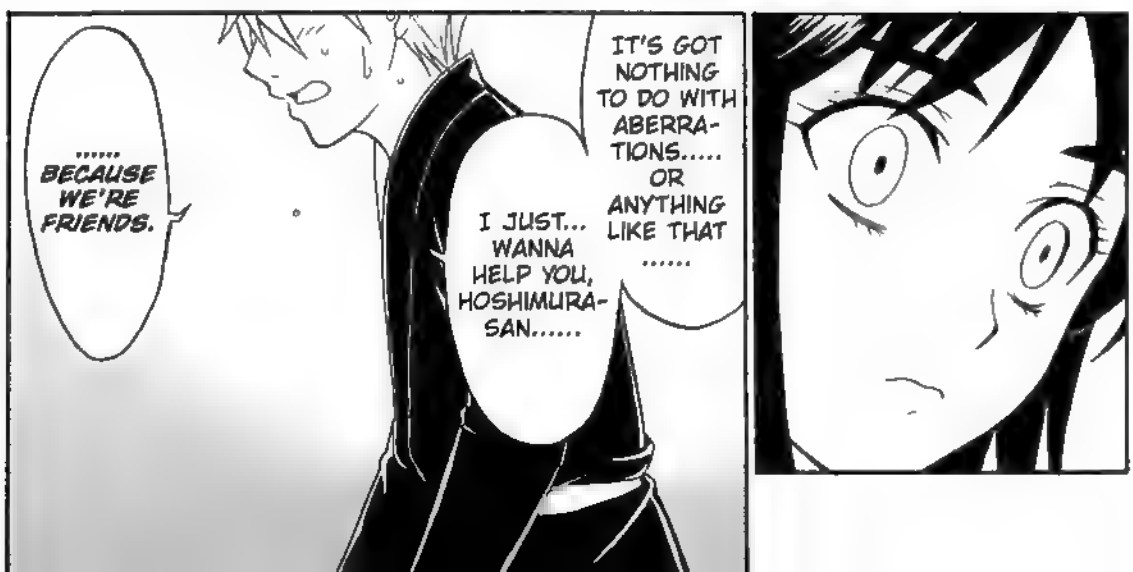
I APPRECIATE YOUR RESOLVE AND CONCERN, OURI, BUT .....
BOOM
I'M A CORPSE PRINCESS. AN ABERRATION. THAT'S THE INESCAPABLE TRUTH.
BOOM

BUT STILL..... I COULD NEVER BRING MYSELF TO DO SOMETHING LIKE GOUGING OUT YOUR EYE, HOSHIMURA-SAN.
THERE ARE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN US THAT I CAN'T DENY.
!?
YEAH..... WELL, I JUST HAD A LONG TALK WITH TAKAMASA... SAN.
AND I GET IT NOW.

SO...
.....
...I'VE DECIDED THAT I'M GOING TO GET YOU TO LIKE ME.
BOOM
!?
CRACK
I SAID... I'M GONNA GET YOU TO LIKE..... ME.....
.....
LIKE .....?
.....
DANGLE
WHAT'D... YOU JUST SAY.....?

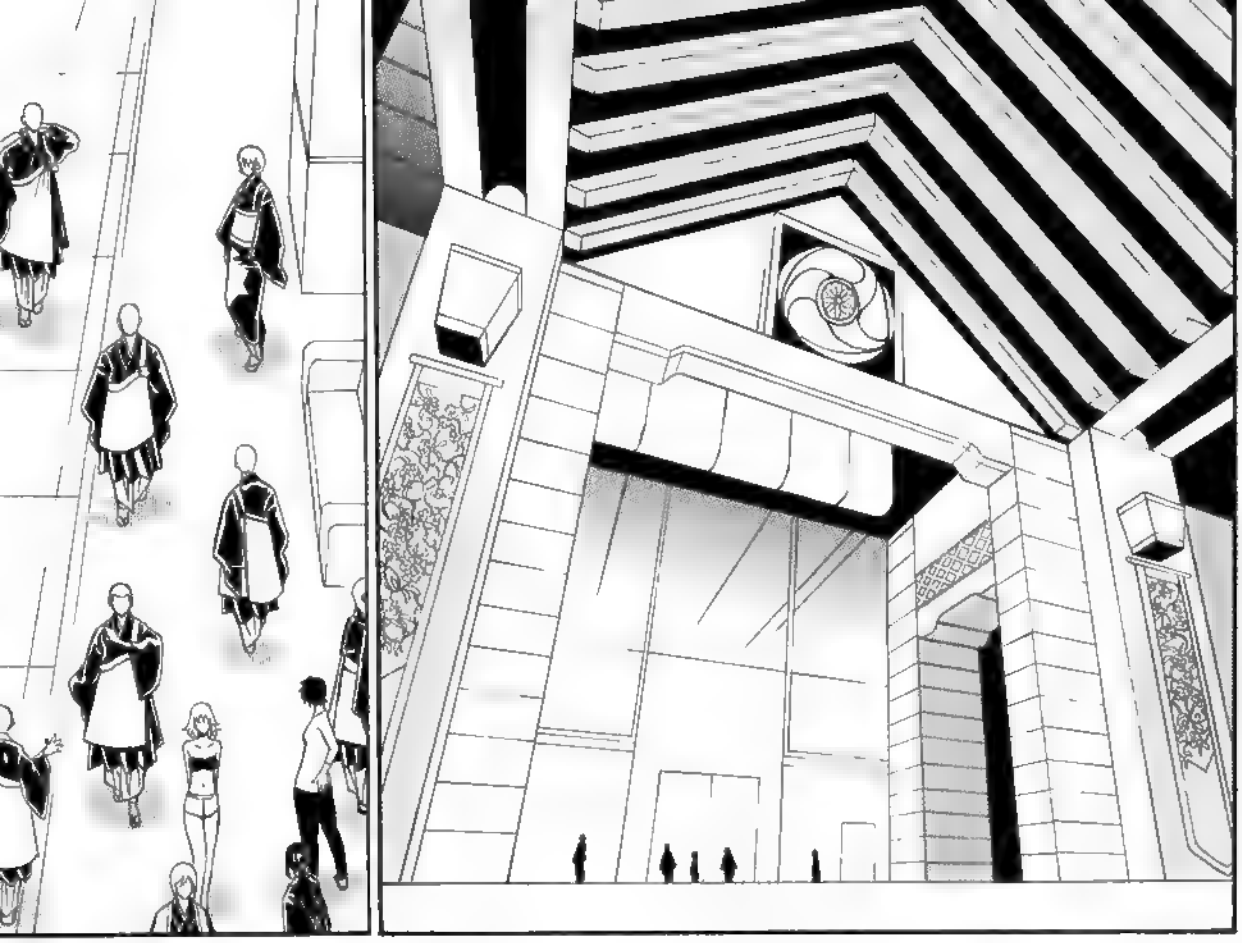
N-NO!! NOT LIKE THAT!! I..... UH.....
SHAKE
SHAKE
UMMM.....!! HOW DO I PUT THIS.....
....


ANYWAY.....!! I JUST WANT YOU TO..... .....YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT.....
I MEAN, I'M A FRIEND, HERE TO HELP YOU MAKE YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE...I WANT YOU TO UNDERSTAND THAT..... FOR ME.....


IT'S GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH ABERRA-TIONS..... OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT .....
I JUST... WANNA HELP YOU, HOSHIMURA-SAN.....
..... BECAUSE WE'RE FRIENDS.

SO..... WHAT I'M SAYING IS.....
...I ALSO WANT YOU.....TO SEE ME AS A FRIEND .....
.....
.....I GET IT.
..... THANKS, OURI.
I THINK I'D JUST FORGOTTEN ...
...HOW TO HAVE FRIENDS.

!
OURI!!
SLAM
SHIRAE-SAN!! GLAD TO SEE YOU UP AND ABOUT!
YES. SORRY FOR WORRYING YOU.
WE'RE BEING CONVENED NOW, THOUGH.
EH?
IT'S AN EMERGENCY MEETING!!
WE'RE ALL TO ATTEND THE HEAD TEMPLE'S HIGHEST CONFERENCE— THE RITE OF DISCOURSE.
EVERY LOCAL CONTRACTING MONK AND INVESTIGATOR, INCLUDING THOSE FROM IKAI AND YANATSU CITIES.

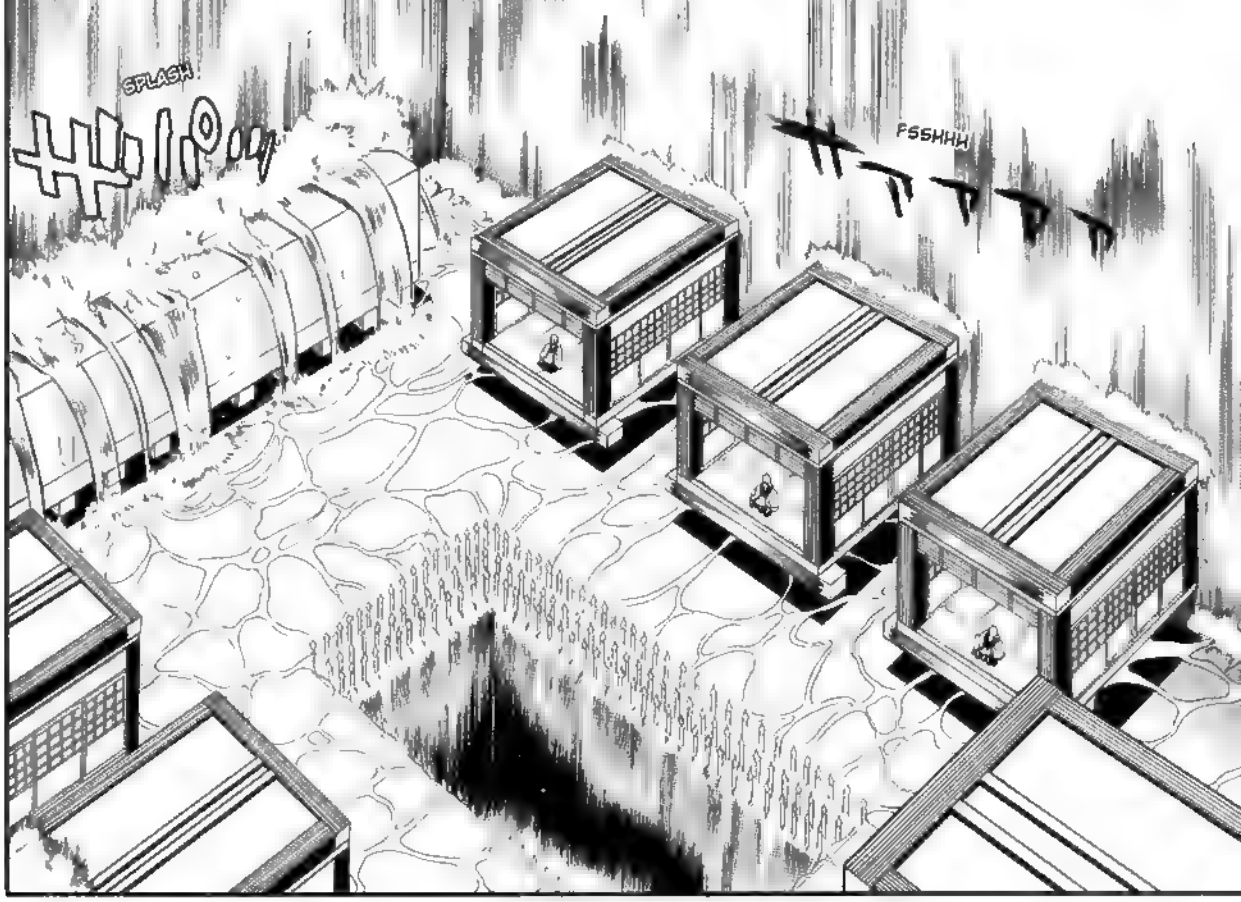


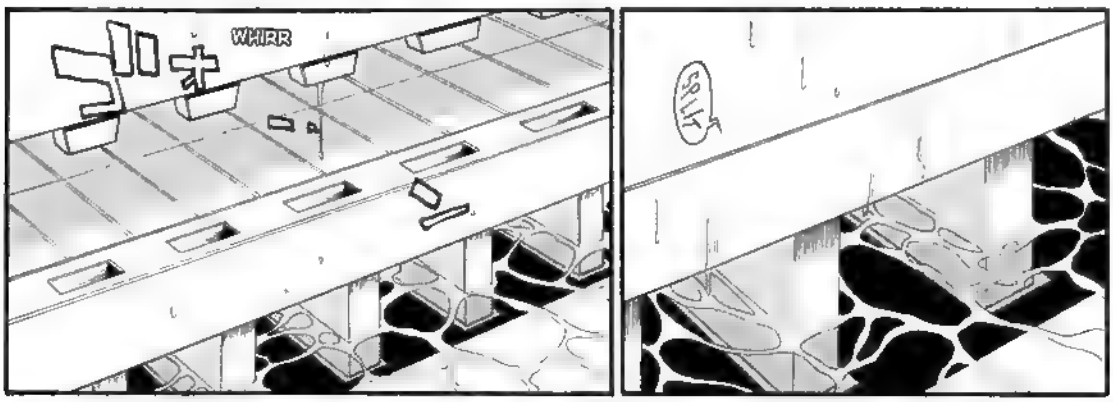
OURI! THIS WAY.
TAKA-MASA .....!
SAN ...

IT'S EVERY MONK FROM THE METRO-POLITAN AREA.
TRY NOT TO FALL BEHIND, PLEASE.
WHOA.
SO MANY PEOPLE.

..... GOT IT.

IT'S ABOUT TO START.
CONTRACTING MONKS, CORPSE PRINCESSES, AND BUREAU CHIEFS ARE ALL BEING LET INTO THE RITE CHAMBER ITSELF.

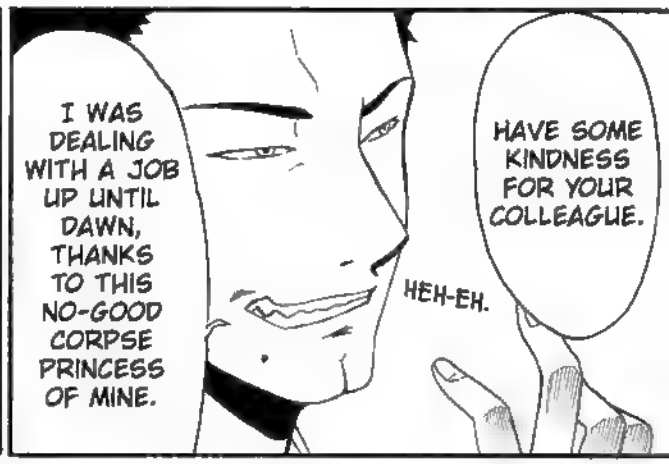

SPLASH
FSSHHH


WHIRR

THIS MEETING ALSO CONCERNS "OPERATION SEALED DEITY," SO.....
HEY, SOUGI !!
!
.....!
WOW.....! ALL THESE CORPSE PRINCESSES IN ONE PLACE.
YEAH.
AND NOT EVEN IN UNIFORM.
FUJI-GAMI..... SAN.
...HI THERE
STEP
IT'S BEEN A WHILE.
HMPH.
SO THIS IS.....THE PINT-SIZED CONTRACTOR EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT.....
AND HOSHI-MURA, WAS IT?

HEY, WHY SO COLD, MAN?
YES..... WAS THAT ALL YOU WANTED?
HMPH.
!

S-S-SORRY.
SHUT UP. DID I SAY YOU COULD TALK, IDIOT?
..... JEEZ.


I WAS DEALING WITH A JOB UP UNTIL DAWN, THANKS TO THIS NO-GOOD CORPSE PRINCESS OF MINE.
HEH-EH.
HAVE SOME KINDNESS FOR YOUR COLLEAGUE.

I MUST'VE WORN MYSELF RAGGED BABYSITTING HER, 'COS THEY FOUND ME SLEEPING IN THE ROAD THE OTHER DAY...
YAWN
...AND THEY STICK ME WITH THIS DIMWIT OVER HERE.
IT SUCKS. I FINALLY GET TO BE A CONTRACTING MONK...

S-SORRY.
SHADDUP!
NOTHING BUT BAD DREAMS LATELY.

ANYWAY, SOUGI.
YOU PUT IN A REQUEST TO JOIN OPERATION SEALED DEITY?
...YES. SO?
WHADDYA KNOW. ME TOO.
!

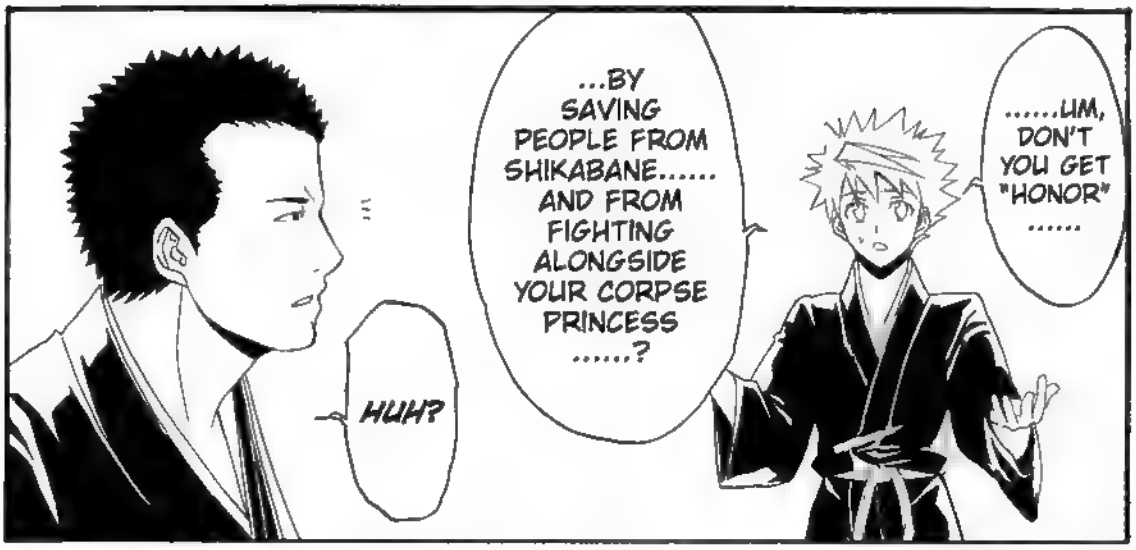
HUH?
UMM... WHAT'S... OPERATION SEALED DEITY... EXACTLY?

IT'S A PLAN TO WIPE OUT THIS COCKY BUNCH OF SHIKABANE SCUM ALL AT ONCE .....!
!!
SPECIFICALLY, BY ASSASSI-NATING THEIR "KING."

IT'S GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH A SQUIRT LIKE YOU.....IS WHAT I'D LIKE TO SAY...
...BUT FINE. I'LL TELL YOU.

!
SURE, THERE'S A TON OF DANGER INVOLVED, BUT...
JUST IMAGINE THE ACCOLADES AND HONOR ONCE WE SUCCEED.

TAKA-MASA'S..... GONNA GO ON A RISKY MISSION LIKE THAT .....?
...


HUH?
...BY SAVING PEOPLE FROM SHIKABANE..... AND FROM FIGHTING ALONGSIDE YOUR CORPSE PRINCESS .....?
.....UM, DON'T YOU GET "HONOR" .....

YOU NEVER LEARN.
ARE YOU STILL GOING ON ABOUT FIGHTING FOR YOUR CORPSE PRINCESS'S SAKE? HUH?
FLIK

.....HEY, SOUGI.
ARE YOU THE ONE WHO TAUGHT THIS IDIOT TO THINK LIKE THAT?
.....

HA.
DIDN'T YOU PASS THE CONTRACTING MONK EXAM WITH FLYING COLORS? HOW FAR THAT LITTLE GENIUS HAS FALLEN.
MAYBE ...
...GETTING THE SHIT KICKED OUT OF YOU BY THAT ONE SHIKABANE LEFT YOU BROKEN .....?

WE FIGHT FOR OUR OWN SAKES!! TO ACHIEVE ENLIGHTENMENT AND FIND VIRTUE!!
THERE'S NO REASON TO SEE THEM AS ANYTHING MORE THAN TOOLS FOR US TO USE, YOU IDIOT!!

SO DON'T FORGET IT!!

HUH?
THE RITE OF DISCOURSE IS STARTING.
..... SIT DOWN.
YOU SOUGI!! .....!! YOU LOOKIN' DOWN ON ME!? LISTEN HERE .....
GRAB
COWARD.
..... TCH.
SIT DOWN.
...
TWITCH

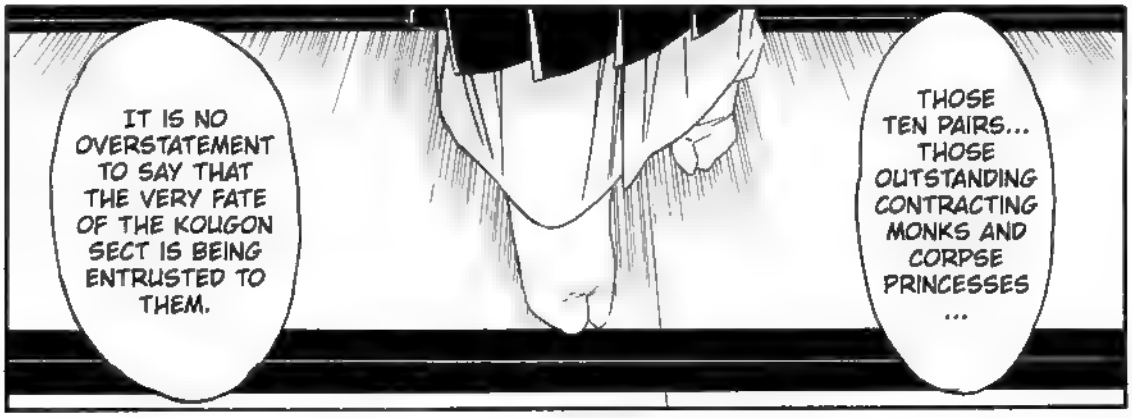
FLIK
NOW BEGINS ...
...THE RITE OF DISCOURSE.
AS SOME OF YOU ALREADY KNOW, IN RESPONSE TO THE EVER-INCREASING THREAT POSED BY THE UNCLEAN BUNCH, WE'VE FORMULATED A PLAN TO ANNIHILATE THE SHIKABANE SWARM IN ONE FELL SWOOP.
I'LL WASTE NO TIME IN EXPLAINING THE STATE OF AFFAIRS.
..... SOUJOU UMEHARA, IF YOU WILL.

どよ…！
CHATTER
IT'S A MISSION TO ASSASSINATE THE UNCLEAN BUNCH'S LEADER—THE "KING".....!!
WE'RE CALLING IT "OPERATION SEALED DEITY."

TEN CONTRACTING MONK AND CORPSE PRINCESS TEAMS WILL INFILTRATE THE ENEMY'S LAIR.
OUR SOLE TARGET IS THE KING!!
THE OPERATION WILL COMMENCE TWO WEEKS FROM NOW !!

WE KNOW THAT THEY'VE BEEN DISRUPTING YAMA CITY'S PULSE LINES IN PREPARATION FOR AN INVASION.
BUT THEIR PLANS REQUIRE A MONTH OR TWO, AT THE VERY LEAST.
BEFORE THEN, WE WILL BRING THE FIGHT TO THEM!!
.....

SQUAD MEMBERS WILL BE SELECTED FROM THE LIST PROVIDED BY SOUJOU UMEHARA. EACH SOUJOU WILL MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS, AND THE DAI-SOUJOU WILL HAVE THE FINAL SAY.
YES.
YOU WILL LEAD THE SQUAD, SOUJOU UMEHARA.
INDEED.


IT IS NO OVERSTATEMENT TO SAY THAT THE VERY FATE OF THE KOUGON SECT IS BEING ENTRUSTED TO THEM.
THOSE TEN PAIRS... THOSE OUTSTANDING CONTRACTING MONKS AND CORPSE PRINCESSES ...

BUT THE UNCLEAN BUNCH WILL NOT BE ERADICATED UNLESS EVERY SINGLE ONE OF US GIVES ALL THAT HE OR SHE CAN.
SOME OF YOU HERE TODAY WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE OPERATION, AND SOME WILL NOT.

THIS IS FOR THE GOOD OF ALL CREATION.
THIS IS OUR JOB, AS THE GUARDIANS OF JUSTICE AND ALL LIVING THINGS.
WITH THAT THOUGHT IN YOUR HEARTS ...
...PLEASE MAKE YOUR NECESSARY PREPARA-TIONS.
YES.
STAND
EH?
?
STAND
YES.
BADUM
AN ASSAULT ON THE UNCLEAN BUNCH'S HIDEOUT .....!!
OPERATION SEALED DEITY.....!
BADUM
BADUM
.....
BADUM
COME ON, OURI. LET'S HEAD BACK.
EH? HUH? ALREADY .....?
WAIT... BUT .....

...
SUPPOSED TO BE DETERMINED .....
I'M.....
!
OURI?
STOMP
SO FOR HER SAKE..... I'VE GOTTA SPEAK UP NOW.....!!
...DETERMINED TO FIGHT..... FOR HOSHIMURA-SAN'S SAKE .....!!
IT'S NOW OR NEVER .....!!
STEP
I MIGHT NEVER GET ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY LIKE THIS.....
.....
EXCUSE ME!!
PLEASE WAIT!!

! THAT'S .....
..... OURI?
.....
THIS .....
ゴクリ GULP
THIS MISSION .....
OPERATION SEALED DEITY.
PLEASE..... LET ME JOIN!!

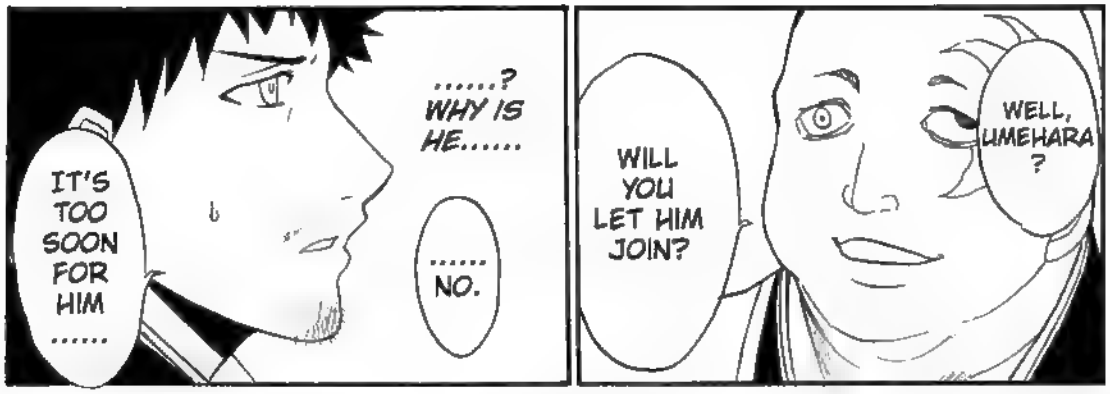
!?
WHAT THE.....? WHAT'RE YOU.....
THE SEVEN STARS ...
...ARE AT THE UNCLEAN BUNCH'S HIDEOUT !!

IF HOSHIMURA-SAN..... IS EVER GOING TO SETTLE HER REGRETS .....
...SHE NEEDS ANOTHER CHANCE TO CONFRONT THE SEVEN STARS!!

IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE ONE WEEP.
!

BUT .....
YOU DUMMY .....!!
OURI, YOU CAN'T .....

SMACK
パニ
I SEE.


IT'S TOO SOON FOR HIM .....
.....? WHY IS HE.....
..... NO.
WILL YOU LET HIM JOIN?
WELL, UMEHARA ?

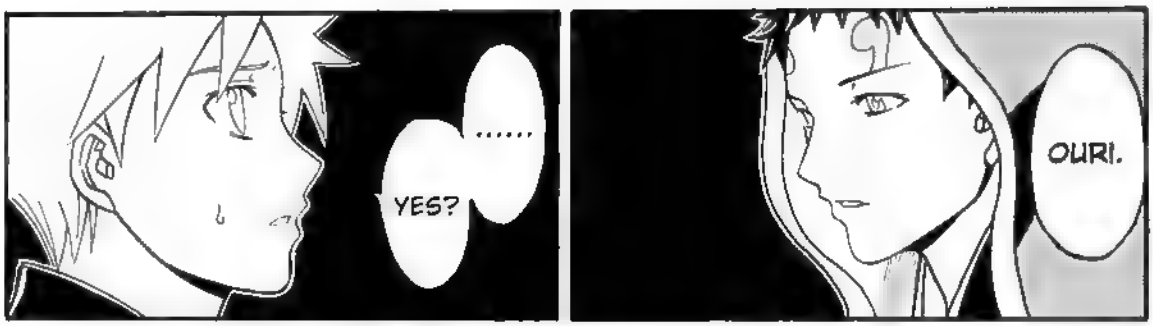
... THEN THIS MUST BE HER DESTINY, NO?
IF THE SEVEN STARS POSE SUCH A THREAT TO THIS AS-SASSINATION MISSION...
—HAS ALREADY DEMONSTRATED HER VALUE IN BATTLES AGAINST THE SEVEN STARS.
...
FROM WHAT I UNDERSTAND, HIS CORPSE PRINCESS— THIS "HOSHI-MURA"—
OH, REALLY ?

BRINGING OUR RIDICULOUS POWER STRUGGLE INTO THIS!!
YOU GREEDY OLD FOX !!
LEAVE THE TRIFLING PAPER-PUSHING TO US AND FOCUS ON YOUR TASK.
BY NATURE..... CORPSE PRINCESSES AND CONTRACTING MONKS EXIST TO BATTLE SHIKABANE.

HMPH
ALSO .....
THAT'S OUR ONLY SHOT AT WINNING.
BUT IT'S BEEN DECIDED THAT THE ENTIRE KOUGON SECT NEEDS TO PITCH IN AND HELP.
HAS ALL THAT MONEY MADE YOU SENILE!?

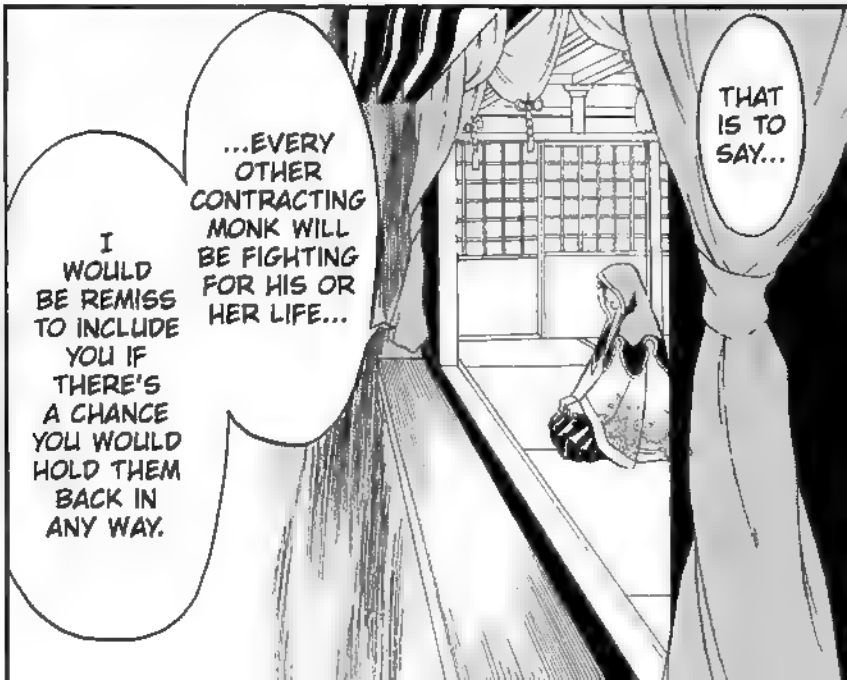
RIGHT ?
...IS THE DAI-SOUJOU-SAMA'S TO MAKE.
THAT'S RIGHT..... AND WHATEVER OUR REASONING, THE FINAL DECISION ...

FWISH


.....
YES?
OURI.

BUT I CANNOT ASSIGN TO THE SQUAD ANYONE WHO ISN'T PRIORITIZING THE PRIMARY GOAL—THE DEFEAT OF THE KING.
IT IS PAINFULLY CLEAR TO ME HOW MUCH YOU WISH TO FIGHT FOR YOUR CORPSE PRINCESS.

.....
UHH.

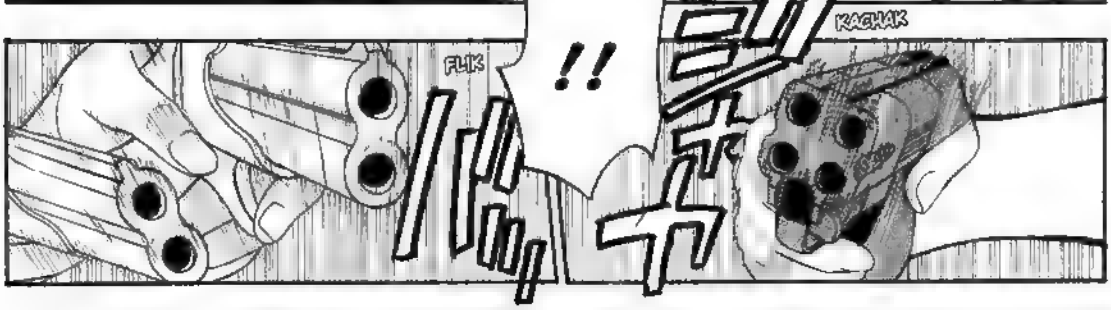

I WOULD BE REMISS TO INCLUDE YOU IF THERE'S A CHANCE YOU WOULD HOLD THEM BACK IN ANY WAY.
...EVERY OTHER CONTRACTING MONK WILL BE FIGHTING FOR HIS OR HER LIFE...
THAT IS TO SAY...

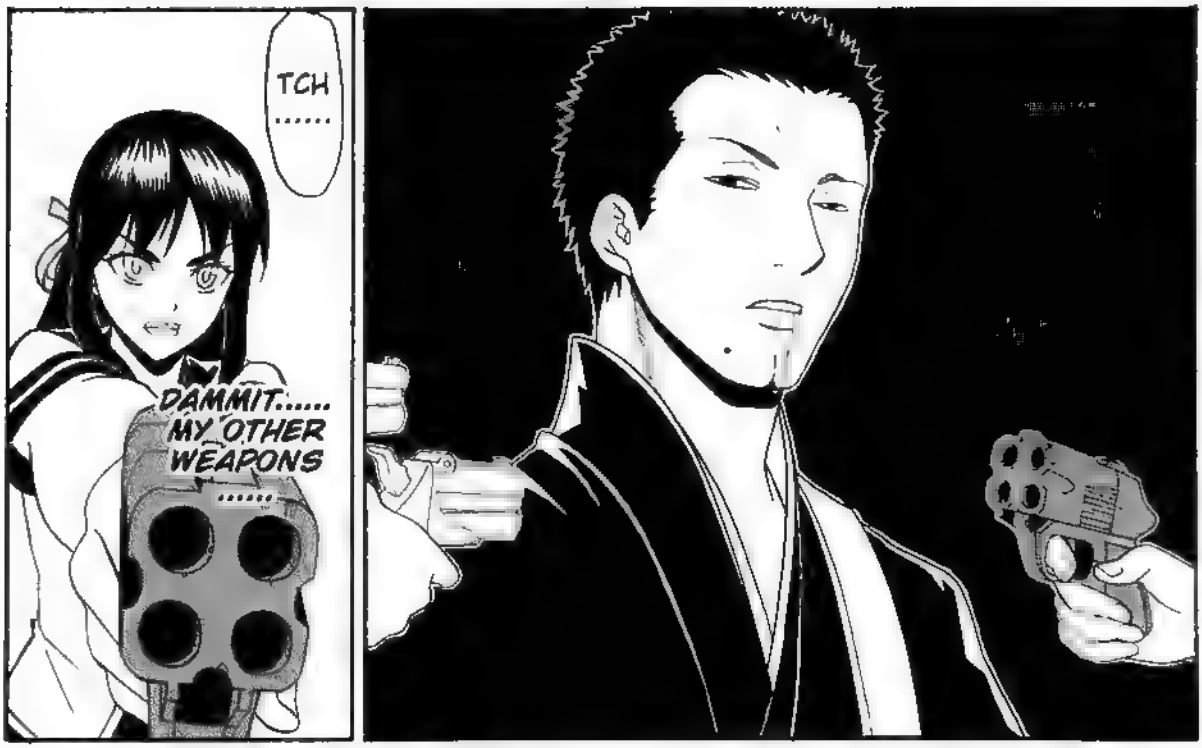
THEN, IF YOU WISH TO JOIN THE REAR GUARD, WHICH WILL SUPPORT THE ASSASSINATION SQUAD...
...I WILL ALLOW IT.
THAT SAID .....
DEMON-STRATE TO ME YOUR POTENTIAL, OURI.....
MM.
BUT THIS WILL NOT BE EASY, OURI.
THANK YOU!!
TH—
!!
DAI-SOUJOU !!
THUMP
!?
.....?
DAI—
!
YOU MUST OVERCOME MANY TRIALS AND PROVE THAT YOU ARE WORTHY TO—

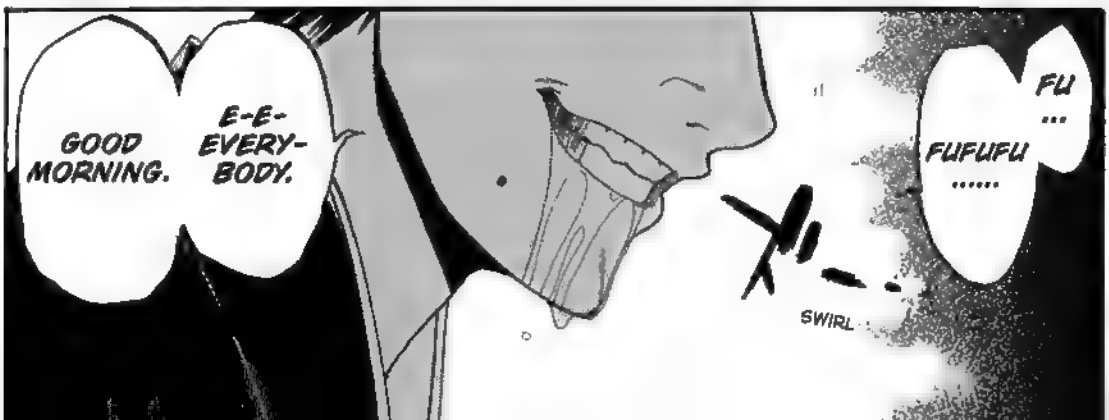
SWAY
EH?
DAI-SOUZU FUJIGAMI .....?
DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY AS WELL?
FUJI-GAMI .....?
...!?
..... DR—
..... DREAM.
I..... HAD A DREAM.
!?
FWISH
TWO NIGHTS AGO..... I.....
FU-FUJIGAMI-SAN.
YOU CAME BACK SO SUDDENLY... WHAT'S THE MATTER!?
TMP
TMP

FWOOSH
WHOOSH
KYAHH .....
FWOOM
!?
WIND !?
WHAT IS THIS ?
GET THE LIGHTS ...
INSIDE !?
SO DARK..... SO PAINFUL .....
SUCH A PLEASANT..... DREAM.....
THAT'S WHY .....
SHINE
CLICK

EXTEND
!SHOCK
WHERE'D THAT COME FROM .....?
A GUN !?
HEY .....
EH?
FWIP
BLAM
BLAM


!!
KACHAK
FLIK


TCH
.....
DAMMIT..... MY OTHER WEAPONS .....


GOOD MORNING.
E-E-EVERY-BODY.
FU ...
FUFUFU .....
SWIRL

IT'S TIME ...
SWELL
...FOR A NIGHTMARE.
TWINGE
TWINGE
TWINGE
TWINGE

BOOM
MAKINA!! ITSUKI!!
!!
SHOOT HIM!!

FLIK
SPURT
!?
SLICE
SLICE
ITSUKI !!
HOSHI-MURA-SAN!!

BURST
FU.
UFU.
FUFUFU.
TMP
NOW THAT I'M AWAKE..... IT'S TIME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF .....
SCRATCH
U FU FU.

MY NAME IS...
...MILAM PARTHO.
BOW

I SERVE AS ONE OF THE UNCLEAN BUNCH'S FOUNDERS.
UFU.
PLEASED TO MEET YOU ALL.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT: MESSAGES FROM THE "CORPSE PRINCESS: RED" ANIME STAFF

WE'LL DO OUR BEST WITH THE ANIME.
KU
HURRY UP AND GET TO WORK!
...OR SOMETHING
LET'S REALLY GIVE IT OUR ALL!!
MURATA
LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING HOW THE STORY UNFOLDS FROM HERE ON!!
HIROKAZU KOJIMA
KEEP ON DOING GREAT WORK, AKAHITO-SENSEI. WE'LL DO OUR BEST WITH THE ANIME ADAPTATION!
FAN-SERVICE
GYAHHH!
KIKUKO SADAKATA

CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT: CHIKASHI KUBOTA (CHARACTER DESIGNER), MASAHIKO MURATA (DIRECTOR), KIKUKO SADAKATA (CHARACTER DESIGNER), HIROKAZU KOJIMA (SHIKABANE DESIGNER)

DEATH 40: KALI

...!?
WHOOOOSH
YES.
AS YOU SAY, THE KOUGEN SECT'S ANTI-EVIL DEFENSES ARE IMPENE-TRABLE.
AS SUCH, THIS IS NOT THE REAL ME, BUT RATHER A PRODUCT OF THE DREAM.
YOU STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND ?
TMP
U FU FU.

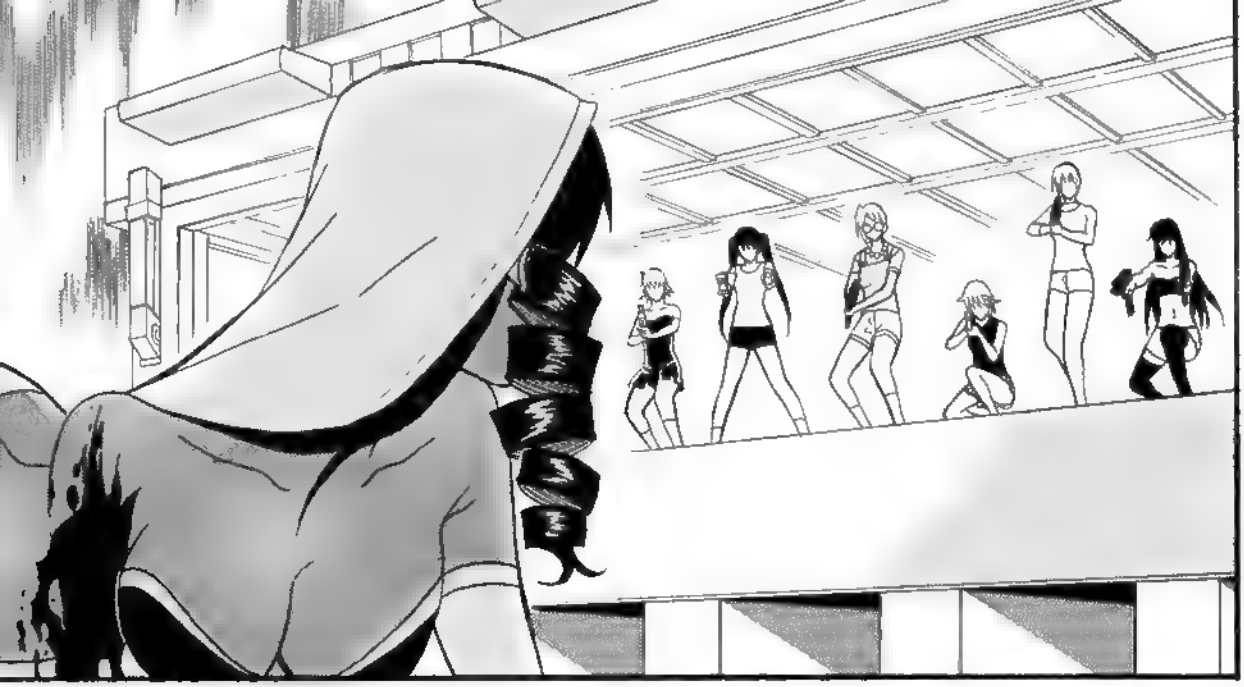
!?
WHAT ...? IN MID-AIR.....?
STEP
!!

SHIT !!
SAWAMIYA!! GET ME MY WEAPON.
Y- YES .....
SHIRAE— YOU GET EVERYONE BACK IN HERE.
HURRY !!
TURN
TCH .....
DAI- SOUJOU !!
U FU FU.
AT LAST WE MEET. YOU APPEAR FAR YOUNGER THAN I IMAGINED, DAI-SOUJOU-SAMA. ♡
STAND DOWN.
THESE HALLS ARE NOT MEANT TO BE TREAD BY EVIL SUCH AS YOU.
RETURN TO THE EARTH AND FACE REINCARNATION AS YOU SHOULD.

...ONCE MY BLADE HAS YOU ON THE VERGE OF DEATH?
THAT COMPOSURE... WILL YOU BE ABLE TO MAINTAIN IT...
SLIDE
OH.
HOW UNKIND.
..... BUT...
DAI-SOUJOU !!
FWISH
UFU.

PIERCE
!!
SLASH
FWIP
SPLASH
SPLASH
SPLASH
SKID
PLONK
SHIFT
YOU'RE
.....
!!

IT'S OVER, UNCLEAN BUNCH FOUNDER.
TAP
SHING
YOU'RE CLEARLY CONFIDENT IN YOUR ABILITIES, BUT...
... COMING HERE ALONE WAS RECK-LESS.
!
SKID
SKID
KACHAK



YOU STAND BEFORE THE GODDESS OF DEATH AND WAR.
KALI.

THAT, COMING FROM A PACK OF POWERLESS LITTLE KITTENS?
.....UFU.
RECK-LESS?

...

FIRE.
KALI.....?

BOOM
BOOM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BILLOW

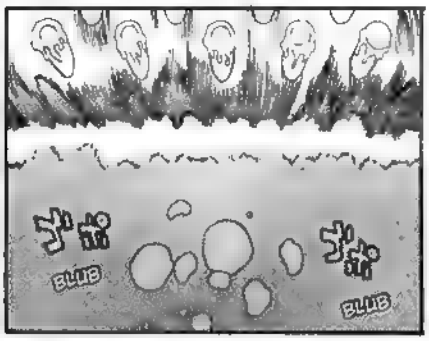
FLOAT
FLOAT

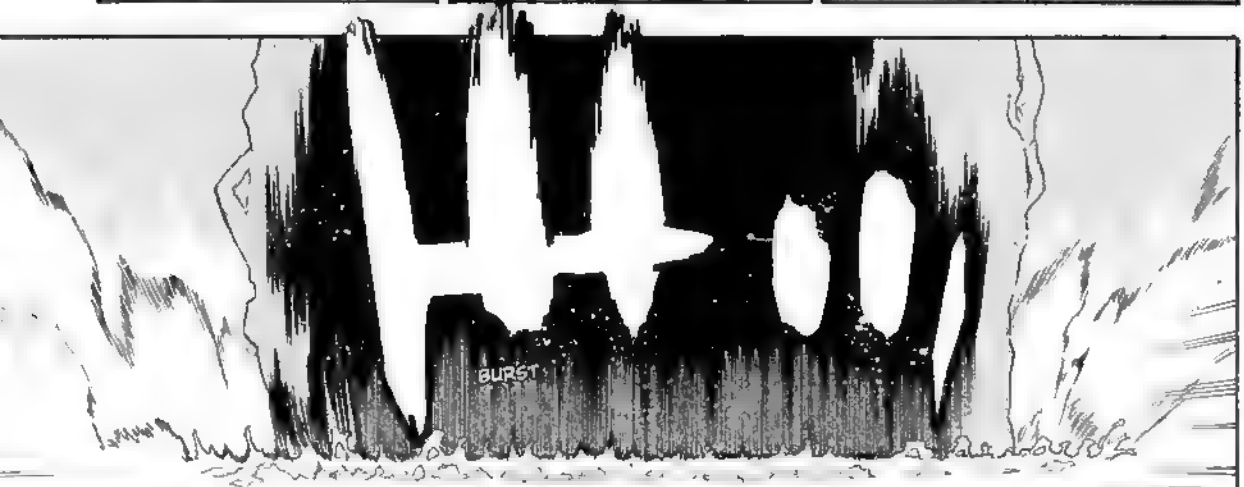
Deeper, now..... Deeper .....
HER VOICE .....?
!!
WHAT !?
Ufu... Fufufu. No, no. That won't work.....
BLUB
.....
Fu.....

...YOU WON'T EVEN BEGIN TO COMPREHEND THE NATURE OF KALI.
YES..... UNLESS YOUR SLASHES AND SHOTS CAN PIERCE DEEP INTO THE DREAM...

RISE

!


BLUB
BLUB


BURST

WHAT THE HELL IS THAT .....!?
IS IT EVEN REAL?
NO WAY.
.....
RIGHT.....
.....A "DREAM".....
IT'S LIKE A NIGHTMARE IS BLEEDING OVER INTO REALITY.....!!

SKLORT
SQUISH
COME... JOIN ME IN SLEEP.
FU... FU FU.
NOW IT'S TIME FOR A DREAM.
BUT HOW .....
IT'S... SO BIG .....
SKLORT
...WHERE THE LINE BETWEEN REALITY AND ILLUSION IS BLURRED.
LET US SINK AND DROWN IN MY DREAM TOGETHER .....
... SLEEP OF DEATH.
IN THIS ...
.....
BURST!

TCH!!
FWIP
!!
BAM
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
WHAM
WHAM
WHAM

SO THAT IS THE TRICK TO YOUR DREAM?
WHAT A FOUL THING YOU'VE DONE .....
...I SEE.

SWIRL
SWIRL
SWIRL

WHOOSH

YOU'LL GO PEACEFULLY.
WOULDN'T YOU BE HAPPIER IF YOU STOPPED RESISTING AND SUNK INTO THE DREAM?
UFUFU.
..... HE'S CAUGHT ON, THEN...?

HUMMM

CRACK
UFU.
CRACK

THEY..... THE MONKS OF THE KOUGON SECT AND THEIR CORPSE PRINCESSES.
DON'T UNDER-ESTIMATE US.
FWIP

SOUJOU TAKAMINE! GET HIS EMINENCE TO SAFETY !!
BEFORE THE UNTHINKABLE HAPPENS AND HE GETS INJURED!!
QUICKLY!!
!
!!
NO, YOUR EMINENCE !!

BAM
THE REST OF YOU, CONTINUE TO BATTLE AS YOU RETREAT!!
SOUJOU UMEHARA. YOU AND SEVERAL OTHERS WILL PUT A STOP TO THIS SHIKABANE !!

THIS MEETING CHAMBER HAS A LONG AND DISTIN-GUISHED HISTORY, BUT...
AFTER THIS INVASION, WE'RE LEFT WITH NO CHOICE.

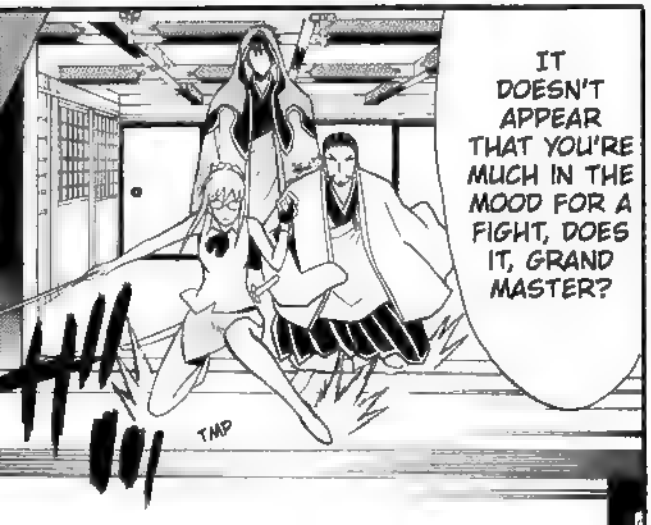
STAND
CHAK
WHAT ABOUT AFTER THAT?
.....! EASIER SAID THAN DONE .....

IN OTHER WORDS..... WE'RE ABANDONING THIS PLACE.....
UNDER-STOOD.
WHO DO I USE?
YOUR CHOICE.
I'LL BE LEAVING TO MAKE PREPARA-TIONS.

OH?
MY, MY, MY.....

I MIGHT DO WELL TO DISPOSE OF THEM FIRST, BUT THEN AGAIN .....
SOME-HOW .....

IT SEEMS THERE ARE STILL SOME DOWN BELOW WHO ARE PLANNING UNTOWARD THINGS .....
HMMM.
WHAT SHALL I DO?


IT DOESN'T APPEAR THAT YOU'RE MUCH IN THE MOOD FOR A FIGHT, DOES IT, GRAND MASTER?
TMP

FWISH

PLEASE RETREAT, DAI-SOUJOU!
...

SLICE
SLICE

UFU. TOO BAD.
I SUPPOSE YOU ESCAPE WITH YOUR LIFE—THIS TIME.
TWITCH
TWITCH
BUT..... COULD IT BE THAT YOU'RE ACTUALLY RELIEVED .....?

STEP
DAI—
.....
.....
AS I ALREADY TOLD YOU, DEAD ONE FROM BEYOND THE SEA ...

GLAK

I WILL SEE YOU DESTROYED !!
OM BAYAMEY SVAHA.
OUR SECT HAS PROTECTED THIS COUNTRY FOR A MILLENNIUM.
...DON'T UNDER-ESTIMATE US!!
HEAVEN'S GALE!!
SEALED MANDALA.
FOOM
!!

CREAK
SHE'S FALLING APART .....!?
!?
BURST
GAHHH.
.....
FU... FUFU.
SWIRL
SWIRL
YOU ...
... HUMAN !!
SLAM
CRACK
.....
HE GOT AWAY.....? WELL, THAT'S FINE.
CRACK
CRACK
MY TRUE TARGET LIES ELSEWHERE .....

WHOOSH
DASH
BOOM
BOOM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
TCH!!
GRIND
CLASH
CLASH
CLASH
THUD
HAA.
HAA.
HAA.
!
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM

FU...
FUFU.

HAA.
SHIT..... AGAIN .....?
HAA .....

RISE
RISE
SWIPL

ALSO, I'VE BEEN FEELING KIND OF SLUGGISH..... IT'S LIKE...
NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I KNOCK 'EM DOWN..... THEY GET RIGHT BACK UP LIKE NOTHING HAPPENED .....

HAA.
.....IS ANY OF THIS.....
...ACTUALLY HAPPENING?
HAA.
WHOOSH

...I REALLY AM..... STRUGGLING INSIDE A DREAM.....

TCH .....
AGUAHHH...
RIP
RIP
YOUR PAIN AND AGONY TOO.
ALL IS THE DREAM OF MILAM PARTHO.
PIERCE
GRAB
YES.
WRAP
ALL..... PART OF THE DREAM.
TEAR
TEAR
AHHH!
CRUNCH
STOP !!
LEAP

HAH.
FLIP
SLAM
!

BUT..... THIS SHIKA-BANE..... WHAT IS SHE?
...YOU SAVED ME, OURI.
HOSHI-MURA-SAN.

THAT'S WRONG!!
NO...
SHIKA-BANE .....?
RISE
RISE
FUFU .....
IT'S NO USE...
FU-FU-FU.
RISE
RISE
RISE

MY MIND'S FEELING A LITTLE FUZZY, BUT STILL..... SOMETHING'S BUGGING ME.
THIS ISN'T LIKE THE OTHER SHIKABANE I'VE MET .....
IT'S MORE LIKE THAT THING. AN ILLUSION WITH MASS .....
THAT SORT OF BEING.....
WHICH MEANS THEY'RE .....
OURI!! MAKINA !!
TAKAMASA!! ITSUKI!!
GET OVER HERE !!
WE'RE JUMPING, OURI.
PLUCK
EH!
TMP
TMP

EH!?
B-
BUT.....
EVEN WHEN SHE GETS SHOT IN THE HEAD, SHE STILL .....
.....YOU'RE SAYING YOU UNDERSTAND THAT THING'S TRUE FORM, MASTER?
HELP ME OUT.
WE'RE GONNA BEAT THAT SHIKA-BANE.
!
LAND
SLAM

FWIP
TURN OUT SHE'S A "KALI."
YUP.
THE DAI-SOUJOU AND TAKAMINE DID SOME RESEARCH CONCERNING WHAT SHE IS.

I'VE ONLY GOT TIME TO EXPLAIN THIS ONCE, SO LISTEN UP.
A SHIKABANE WHO BELONGS TO A GROUP OF ASSASSINS AND TAKES THE NAME OF THE HINDU GODDESS.
!!
KALI?
BAM
SKID
SKID
SKID

I'LL START WITH THE IMPORTANT PART..... WHAT WE'RE SEEING NOW—THE BIG ONE AND THE LITTLE ONES—THEY'RE ALL ILLUSIONS. HALLUCINATIONS, EVEN.
ZOOM
THESE ASSASSINS' MODUS OPERANDI IS COMBINING CANNABIS WITH MUMMY POWDER, AND SCATTERING IT TO CAUSE NIGHTMARE-LIKE ILLUSIONS.
ZOOM
HALLU-CINA-TIONS !?
B-BUT IS THERE A REAL ONE .....?
YES.
BOOM
BOOM

EVERY LAST THING HERE...
...IS A MANIFESTATION OF THAT NIGHTMARE-INDUCING POWDER.

SMASH
CRUNCH
SO SHE'S ABLE TO MAKE THEIR REGRETS HER OWN AND ANIMATE THEM.

BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
ONE PROPERTY OF SHIKABANE IS THAT THEY ALIGN WITH REGRETS THAT MATCH THEIR OWN.
I'D BET THAT THE MUMMIES USED TO MAKE THAT POWDER WERE MILAM'S FELLOW ASSASSINS.

SWIRL
SWIRL
THAT'S THIS FOUNDER'S SHIKABANE CURSE.

...SHE'LL BURST OUT FROM THE INSIDE, JUST LIKE WITH FUJIGAMI.
AND IF ENOUGH OF THAT POWDER ACCUMULATES IN ONE'S BODY...

IN TURN, THE NIGHTMARE WE'RE SEEING WILL INTENSIFY !!
THE LONGER WE FIGHT, THE MORE SCATTERED POWDER WE'LL BREATHE IN.

...THEN WE'VE GOT TO CUT IT OFF AT THE SOURCE BEFORE WE DIE... BY FINDING AND KILLING THE REAL BODY.
IN OTHER WORDS..... IF WE WANNA STOP THIS CURSE...

.....!

I SEE .....
.....
GULP
FINDING THE REAL BODY IN ALL THIS CHAOS WON'T BE EASY.
I DON'T KNOW HOW CLOSE MY HEIGHTENED BOND PERCEPTION WILL GET ME TO FINDING IT, BUT.....I'LL GIVE IT A SHOT.
CRACK
SLAM
SLAM
NO.
THE DAI-SOUJOU TOLD ME...
...THERE'S SOMEONE MORE SUITED TO THAT THAN YOU.
MORE SUITED...? REALLY .....?
OURI.
WILL YOU GO AND SEARCH ?
!!

MAKES SENSE IT'D BE ME.....
EVEN WITH ALL THESE FAKES, THAT WEIRD FEELING I GET SHOULD LEAD ME TO THE REAL ONE!!
!! ...RIGHT!!
... ME?

WHAM
..... NO.
OURI'S STILL A NOVICE WHEN IT COMES TO PERCEIVING BONDS .....!
CRACK
CRACK
WHAM.
BUT WHY.....!? THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE, SENSEI!!

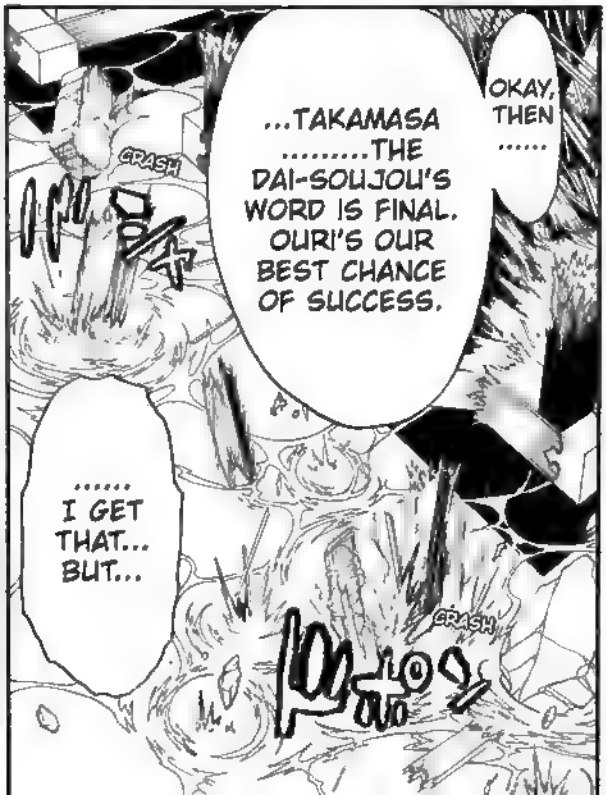
BUT COULD YOU EXPLAIN IT TO US? WHY'D THE DAI-SOUJOU CHOOSE YOU FOR THIS?
UNDER-STOOD.
B-BUT, OURI ...
SPLINTER
SPLINTER

SWIRL
SWIRL
I KNOW I CAN FIND THE REAL BODY!!
I'LL DO IT!

IT'S LIKE..... A CROSS BETWEEN A PHYSICAL BEING AND AN ILLUSION .....
UMM..... I'VE BEEN SEEING THIS THING FOR A WHILE NOW.
.....IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN.
...THE DAI-SOUJOU THINKS I SHOULD BE ABLE TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE.
..... THAT'S WHY...

PLEASE, TAKA-MASA .....
LET ME GO AND DO IT...!!

.....
WATCH YOUR BACK.


OKAY, THEN .....
...TAKAMASA .....THE DAI-SOUJOU'S WORD IS FINAL. OURI'S OUR BEST CHANCE OF SUCCESS.
CRASH
..... I GET THAT... BUT...
CRASH

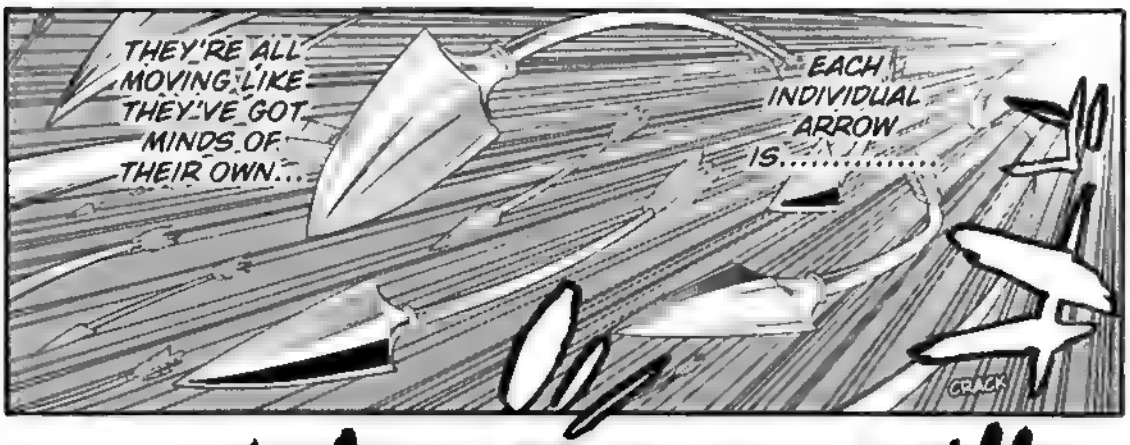
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
OURI, TAKE MY PHONE WITH YOU.
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
WE CAN HELP YOU SEARCH BY SENDING YOU UPDATES AT ANY TIME.
OKAY.
TAKAMASA AND I...
TURN
...WILL STAY HERE AND PUT A STOP TO THAT.
I'LL JUST SAY... WE'VE GOT OUR WORK CUT OUT FOR US.
...OH BOY.
DON'T SAY THAT.
GRIP
THAT I CAN RELY ON MY TWO DISCIPLES TO GET THINGS DONE IS MORE HONOR THAN THIS OLD MASTER DESERVES.

STAND
NOW GET GOING, MY DEAR PUPILS.
OKAY !!
HOSHI-MURA-SAN!!
WERE YOU LISTENING?
DASH
OKAY. OF COURSE.
UFU. IT'S TOO LATE FOR YOU NOW .....
ZOOM
BOOM

BURST
!!
FWOOSH
HAH.
WHAM
WHIRL

SIX REALMS EXORCISM ...
TWO WORLDS SEALED MANDALA.
GHAK
!!
RIP
RIP
...WIND PRESSURE!!
THIS.....
GRIP
PIERCE
PIERCE
PIERCE
PIERCE
PIERCE
PIERCE
THIS VOLUME OF ATTACKS..... ARE THEY ACTUALLY PUSHING ME BACK?
PIERCE
WHOOSH
..... WHAT'S MORE...
!?

SWERVE
BURST
BURST
PIERCE
BURST
SWERVE
SWERVE
SWERVE
!!


THEY'RE ALL MOVING LIKE THEY'VE GOT MINDS OF THEIR OWN...
EACH INDIVIDUAL ARROW IS.....
CRACK

FUDOU MYOU-OU BLADE KONGOU SLASH.
STEP...
SEALED MANDALA !!
HMMMM
THUNK
WELL DONE ...
...MY DEAR PUPIL.
THUNK

!!!
VOOM
...
SWAY
FOOM
POOF

BOOM
BOOM
WHICH WAY!?
LEFT AT THE NEXT CORNER!!
DASH
GOT IT!!
NOT SURE HOW MANY OTHERS ARE SEARCHING FOR THE REAL BODY LIKE WE ARE, BUT THERE CAN'T BE TOO MANY.....
LET'S HURRY!
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT. .....EVEN IF THEY'RE NOT THAT SHIKABANE'S REAL BODY.....
IT'S CRAZY TO THINK HER ATTACK MADE IT THIS FAR INTO THE HEAD TEMPLE .....
.....RIGHT.

I'M SORRY..... HOSHIMURA-SAN.
.....
BUT...I HAD TO SPEAK UP RIGHT THEN .....
BECAUSE I WASN'T SURE... IF YOU'D GET THAT CHANCE AGAIN.
FOR WHAT ?
FOR VOLUN-TEERING FOR OPERATION SEALED DEITY LIKE THAT..... WITHOUT DISCUSSING IT WITH YOU FIRST.....
I KNOW WHY YOU DID IT.
..... IT'S FINE, REALLY.
BECAUSE YOU'RE THE IMPULSIVE TYPE. YOU GET AN IDEA AND TAKE ACTION.
.....? WHY'S THAT?
...THAT JUST HAPPENED TO WORK OUT WELL THIS TIME.
WELL ..
UH .....
EH?

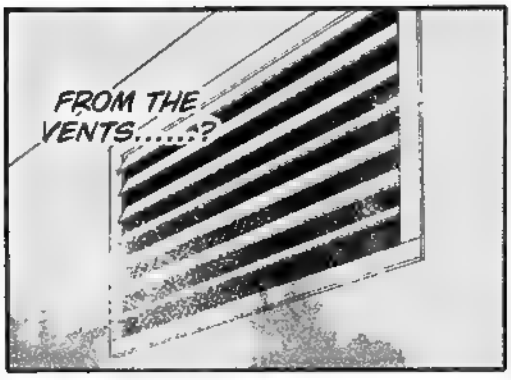
BECAUSE OPERATION SEALED DEITY.....IS DEFINITELY ...
...MY BEST CHANCE TO CONFRONT THE SEVEN STARS AGAIN!

EH?
FSSHH
NOW IT'S MY TURN TO ASK.
...!

AFTER ALL THAT GRAND-STANDING YOU DID ...
SQUEAK
... DO YOU EVEN HAVE A GUESS AS TO WHERE IT MIGHT BE?
AH... YEAH.
EH !?
DOV!
PUFF
THE LOCATION OF THE REAL BODY...
SWIRL
SWIRL
SWIRL

AND MOST LIKELY NEAR A SEWAGE FACILITY THAT SERVES AS A WATER SOURCE .....
WELL..... OUTSIDE THE HEAD TEMPLE, PROBABLY .....
WHERE ?
I SEE.
HE'S GUESSING SHE WENT TO A LOT OF TROUBLE TO SNEAK IN THROUGH THAT DRAINAGE DITCH.
HMPH .....
YOU MIGHT NOT BE WRONG ABOUT THAT .....
AH. RIGHT.
WE'RE DOING GOOD..... JUST NEED TO KEEP AVOIDING SNEAK ATTACKS .....
!
DON'T WORRY.
JUST KEEP GUIDING ME.
BUT... BEYOND THAT..... WE'LL, UH... HAVE TO RELY ON MY INTUITION. ...OR MY BAD LUCK, AS IT WERE.....
SKID
SKID
SKID
!! HOSHI-MURA-SAN!!
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP

SWIRL
SWIRL


FROM THE VENTS.....?

.....
GLANCE
SO MANY ...!
AND..... OUT OF NOWHERE .....

EH!?
I'VE GOT A REALLY BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS.

CROUCH
OURI... BECAUSE I WENT AHEAD AND TRUSTED YOU...
I'M SURE YOU'LL FORGIVE ME FOR WHAT I'M ABOUT TO DO.
.....NO CHOICE THEN.

GRAB

BOOM
WAHH!
DASH
BOOM
BOOM
PUFF
PUFF
BOOM
TMP
THIS IS GONNA BE A BIGGER JUMP THAN LAST TIME.
HOLD ON TIGHT.
PLEASE DON'T TELL ME WE'RE .....
EH!? NO WAY.....
TREMBLE
TREMBLE

KYAHHHH...
...AHHHH!!!
SMASH
WHOOSH

"THIS IS MY BEST CHANCE TO CONFRONT THE SEVEN STARS AGAIN!" SO SAYS MAKINA HOSHIMURA. SHE TRUSTS IN OURI'S DECISION TO PARTICIPATE IN OPERATION SEALED DEITY—THE MISSION TO DEFEAT THE UNCLEAN BUNCH'S KING. MEANWHILE, THE YOUNG CONTRACTING MONK STRUGGLES TO RISE TO THE OCCASION IN THE FACE OF THE FOUNDER'S ASSAULT. THE HEAD TEMPLE IS IN CHAOS AS THE FIGHT AGAINST MILAM INTENSIFIES.

SHIKABANE KILLS NEEDED FOR CORPSE PRINCESS MAKINA HOSHIMURA TO ASCEND TO HEAVEN: 92

10

volume

COMING SOON

※PLEASE BE ADVISED:

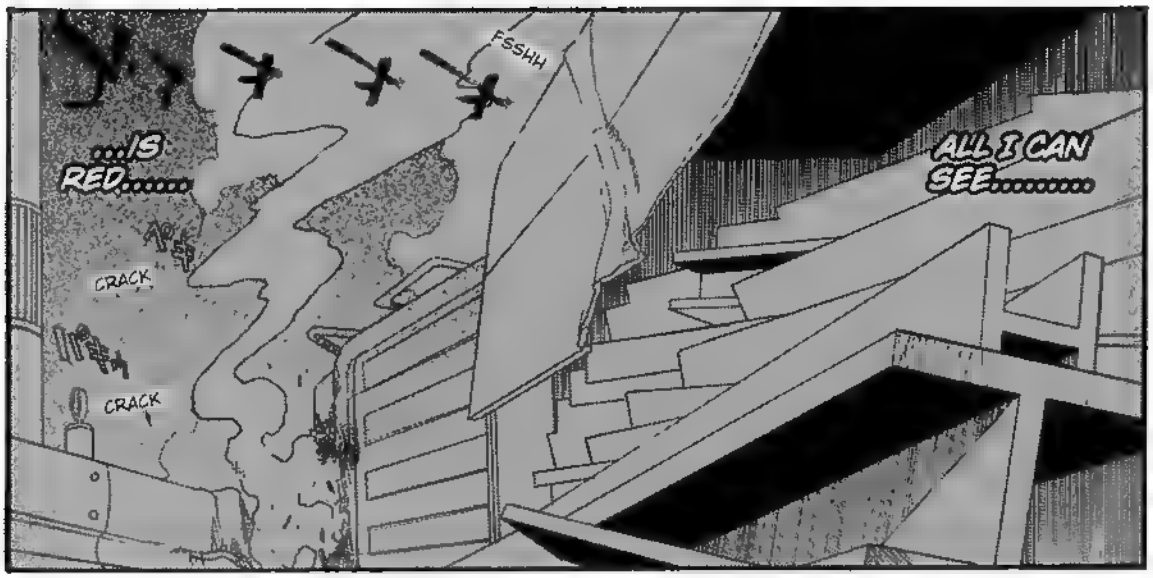
WHAT FOLLOWS IS A PROTOTYPE VERSION OF "CORPSE PRINCESS" FROM A LONG TIME AGO, STARRING ITSUKI AND TAKAMASA. IT WAS WRITTEN A VERY LONG TIME AGO, SO AS YOU READ, PLEASE TRY TO IGNORE ANYTHING THAT SEEMS OFF.

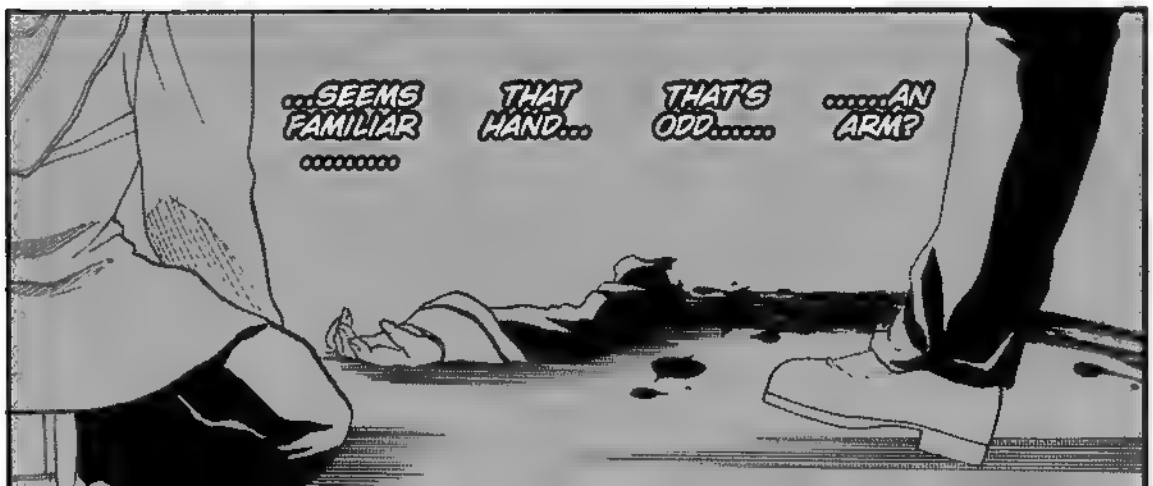
BLINK
MAYBE I'LL PICK UP A PINT OF HÄAGEN-DAZS ON THE WAY HOME.
TODAY'S SATURDAY . ....

DEATH 0: Corpse Princess PALE SCARLET

...AM I.....?
WHERE.....
HUH.....?

SO MUCH RED...
RED.....


FSSHH
...IS RED.....
ALL I CAN SEE.....
CRACK
CRACK


...SEEMS FAMILIAR .....
THAT HAND...
THAT'S ODD.....
.....AN ARM?

NO WAY.....
TOO STRANGE .....
SO YOUNG. WHAT A SHAME.
.....EH?
TERRIBLE. ...SHE DIED INSTANTLY.
I MEAN .....
...STILL.....
I'M.....
...ALIVE.....

YAWN
ふぁ～
太師系密教寺院
天虚寺
HEY.
MORN-ING.
SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAIT-ING.
TOMO-HARU.
SIGN: ...TAISHI-KEI ESOTERIC TEMPLE TENKYOJI
SEEMS ROUGH, TAKA-MASA...
...STAYING UP LATE STUDYING TO INHERIT THE TEMPLE EVERY NIGHT SINCE YOUR POPS PASSED AWAY.
YEAH, I GUESS.
BUT I WAS THE ONE WHO DECIDED TO DO IT, SO I CAN'T IGNORE MY DUTIES.
AND IT'S NOT THAT HARD, HONESTLY.
I'M NOT THE TYPE TO GO OUT AND ABOUT ANYWAY.
SO NOW I SPEND MY WEEKENDS AT HOME, TRAINING.
...
YOU .....
THAT'S... THE KIND OF THING HERMITS AND SHUT-INS DO.
HEY!
IT'S NOT LIKE THAT. IN FACT ...
...TO KEEP MY STRENGTH UP, I DO MARATHON TRAINING FOR FOUR HOURS EVERY MORNING.
TMP
TMP
.....
LIKE AN OLD MAN?

立入禁止
立
KEEP
HEY..... WHAT'S THAT ABOUT?
YOU DIDN'T HEAR, TAKA-MASA?
THERE WERE TWO BIZARRE MURDERS THIS PAST WEEKEND.
THIS WAS THE ONE ON SUNDAY.
TWO MUR-DERS ?
THAT SEEMS PRETTY DARN SERIOUS.
AND BOTH OF THE VICTIMS WERE CLASSMATES OF OURS.
SCHOOL'S GONNA BE PRETTY EMPTY TODAY WITH ALL THE QUESTIONING GOING ON.
YEAH, IT IS.
WE MIGHT HAVE A SERIAL KILLER ON OUR HANDS.
THE POLICE ARE ON HIGH ALERT, OF COURSE.

...
THIS MURDER-ER'S A NUTJOB .....
THE VICTIMS HAD THEIR MONEY STOLEN AND EYES GOUGED OUT BEFORE BEING KILLED.
IT WAS PRETTY GORY TOO.
I HEAR WE'RE GETTING A NEW EXCHANGE STUDENT. FROM A CATHOLIC SCHOOL FOR GIRLS.
THAT IS TO SAY..
...HMPH.
THAT'S ODD.
AS STUDENTS, WE SHOULD BE FOCUSED ON ENJOYING OUR YOUTH.
LET'S LEAVE THE BLOODY STUFF TO THE COPS.
WELL.
AT THIS RATE, YOU'LL SHRIVEL UP BEFORE YOU KNOW IT!! (AND GO BALD)
HEY!! WHAT'S WITH THE LACKLUSTER REACTION!! YOU REALLY THAT INDIFFERENT !?
WORRY ABOUT YOURSELF !!
JEEZ .....

TURN
!?
.....
WHAT'S UP?
...
EH.
AH..... NO... NOTH-ING.
JUST NOW... WHO WAS THAT .....?

CLOSE
...
RIGHT
.....
WOW, HE WAS RIGHT.
IT'S LIKE A GHOST TOWN.
CLATTER
CLATTER
TREMBLE
TREMBLE
...I JUST MADE AN ALARMING DISCOVERY.
TAKA-MASA —
HUH?
YOU OKAY, TOMOHARU ...?
I GLANCED INTO THE STAFF ROOM AS I WALKED BY AND GOT A PEEP AT THAT EXCHANGE STUDENT!
AND GUESS WHAT? SHE'S PRETTY CUTE!!
PRESS
PRESS
STOP GETTING FINGERPRINTS ON MY GLASSES, YOU MORON!!

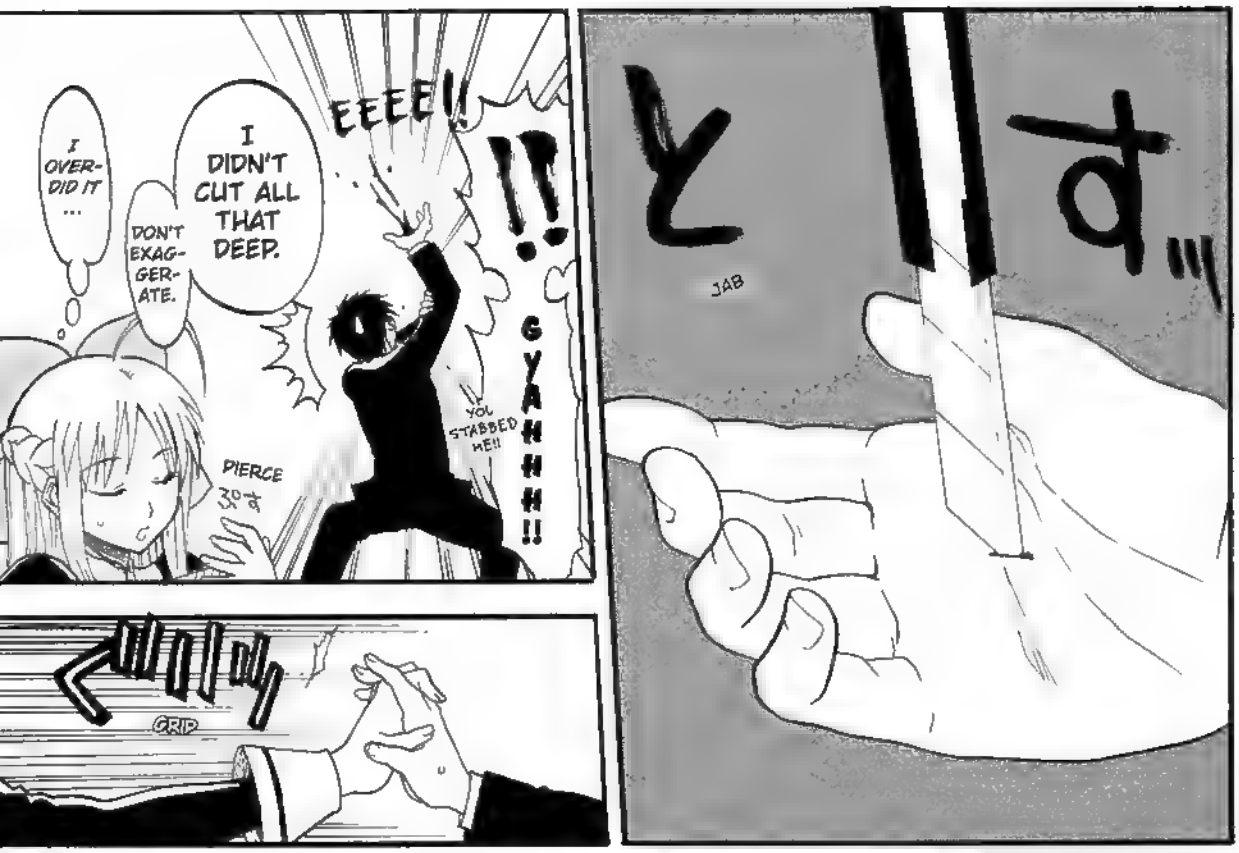
I'M ITSUKI YAMA-GAMI.
PLEASED TO MEET YOU.
CHATTER
CHATTER
OHHHHH.
!
THIS MORN-ING, SHE WAS .....?
SMILE

SHUDDER
?
I GOT CHILLS .....
KUMAGAYA AND THE SEA
HEY... TAKAMASA. SHE'S LOOKING THIS WAY AND SMILING.
SMILE
SMILE
COULD IT BE?
IS A NEW LEGEND ABOUT TO UNFOLD?
YEAH... MAYBE. I WONDER .....
LEGEND ...?
FU-FU-FU-FU.

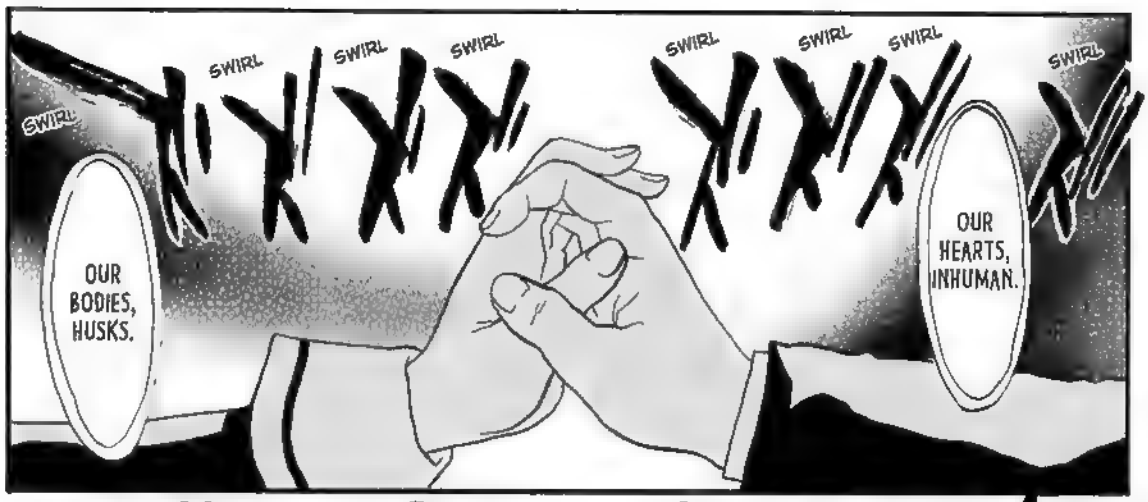
DING
DONG
IT'S LUNCH-TIME.
I'M HEADING TO THE CAFETERIA. YOU COMING, TAKA-MASA?
MM ...
I'LL EAT MY LUNCH ON THE ROOF.
..... TAKA-MASA.
YOU REALLY LIKE THAT ROOF, HUH.
I SHOULDN'T BE WORRIED ABOUT YOU DOING ANYTHING LIFE-ENDING, SHOULD I?
ALWAYS HANGING OUT IN HIGH PLACES.
OF COURSE NOT!!

SFX: TREMBLE TREMBLE

WHAT A SURPRISE.
THIS MORNING..... I VISITED YOUR TEMPLE.....
...IN THE 15-LEVEL HIERARCHY OF SHINGON ESOTERIC BUDDHISM, "GENPAKU" IS THE FIFTH HIGHEST, AND ONE OF THE "SHOU-SOUJOU" TITLE BEARERS .....
TAKAMASA "GENPAKU" SOUGI.....
TURN
I NEVER THOUGHT THE NEW "GENPAKU" WOULD BE SO YOUNG.
?
STEP
AND YOU'VE INHERITED AN INFLUENTIAL TEMPLE.
IN OTHER WORDS ...
YOU'RE IN CHARGE OF EACH REGION'S PROTECTOR.
YOUR HAND, PLEASE.
.....
WHO... ARE YOU?
.....


I OVER-DID IT ...
DON'T EXAG-GER-ATE.
I DIDN'T CUT ALL THAT DEEP.
EEEE!!
!!
GYAHHH!!
YOU STABBED ME!!
PIERCE
JAB
GRIP

BADUM
!
!?
SWIRL
SWIRL
SWIRL
SWIRL
SWIRL
WE HAVE LOST THE KEY AND CONSCIOUSNESS, AND WE SUBMIT AS WE CROSS THE THRESHOLD OF THIS WORLD'S JUSTICE.
SHINGON ...


SWIRL
SWIRL
SWIRL
SWIRL
SWIRL
SWIRL
SWIRL
OUR BODIES, HUSKS.
OUR HEARTS, INHUMAN.

SWIRL
SWIRL
SWIRL
...!?
SWIRL
SWIRL
UNTIL FORTUNE OR DEATH DIVIDE US, WE PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE AS ADHERENTS TO THE FAITH.
SWIRL
SWIRL
SWIRL
SWIRL
WHAT'S ... THIS .....? THIS FEELING...

BADUM
CONTRACT.

OUR CONTRACT IS FORMED.
..... SO.
WHAT NOW, TAKA-MASA? SHALL WE HEAD OUT?
WE OUGHT TO PUT A STOP TO THIS BEFORE ANYONE ELSE FALLS VICTIM.
SHOCK
WHAT?
HUH?
.....
YOU DON'T KNOW .....
EH.
"WHAT" ..... YOU ASK?
GULP
..... ABOUT CON-TRACTS ?
EH?
SILENT
.....

NOPE.
SO YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE TEMPLE? ABOUT ME .....?
.....
IN ORDER TO FOLLOW IN MY FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS, I TOOK HIS MONK TITLE OR WHATEVER .....
...AH. YEAH.
YOU'RE A "GEN-PAKU," RIGHT TAKA-MASA?
.....

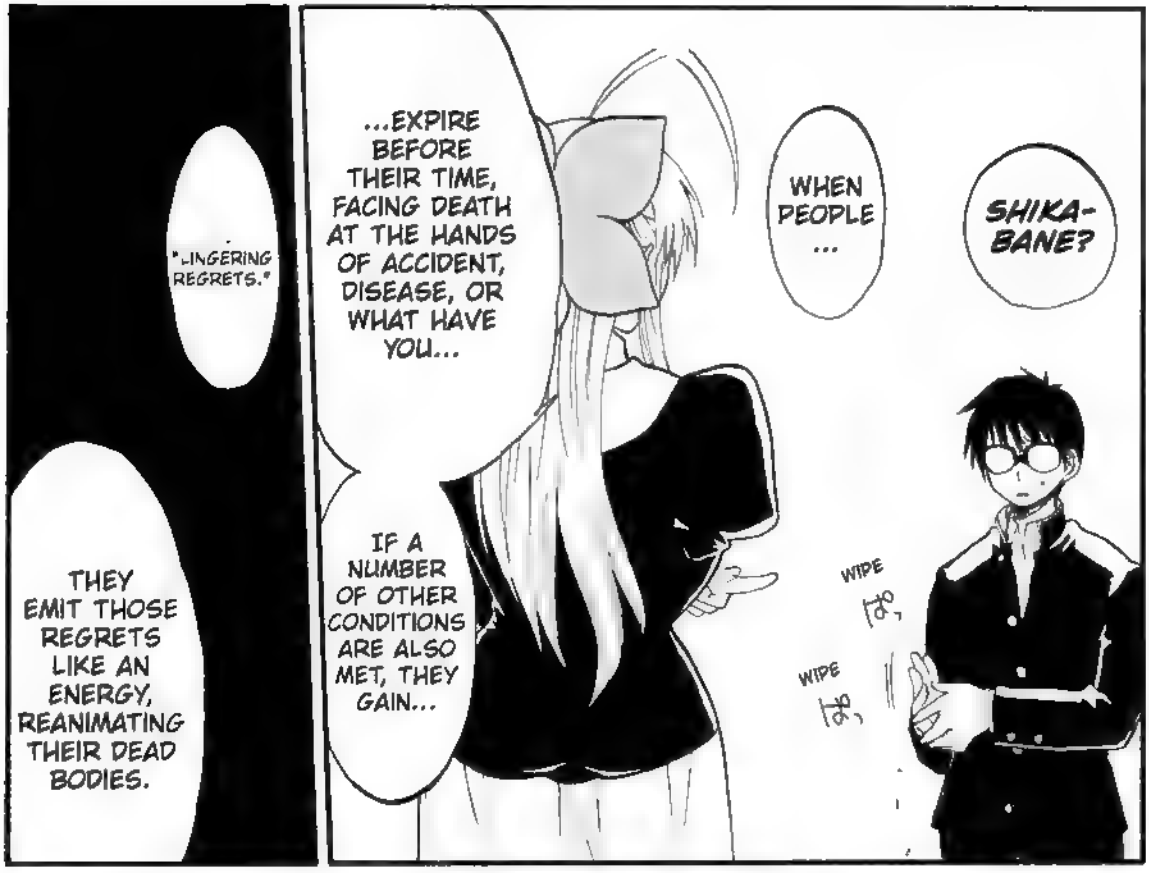
BAM
NOT A THING!!
SHOCK

...
AH.
.....
...
SORRY. ...NOT SURE WHY I'M SORRY, BUT STILL.
HA-HA-HA.
AHHHHHHH..

I REALLY DID IT THIS TIME.
MAN, I ALWAYS PICK THE WORST TIMES TO SCREW UP.
THIS ISN'T HOW IT WAS SUPPOSED TO GO .....
I'M LIKE A SERIAL BLUNDERER.
HMM. I GUESS WE COULD .....
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
MUNCH
SERIAL BLUNDERER...?
THAT'S A NEW ONE.

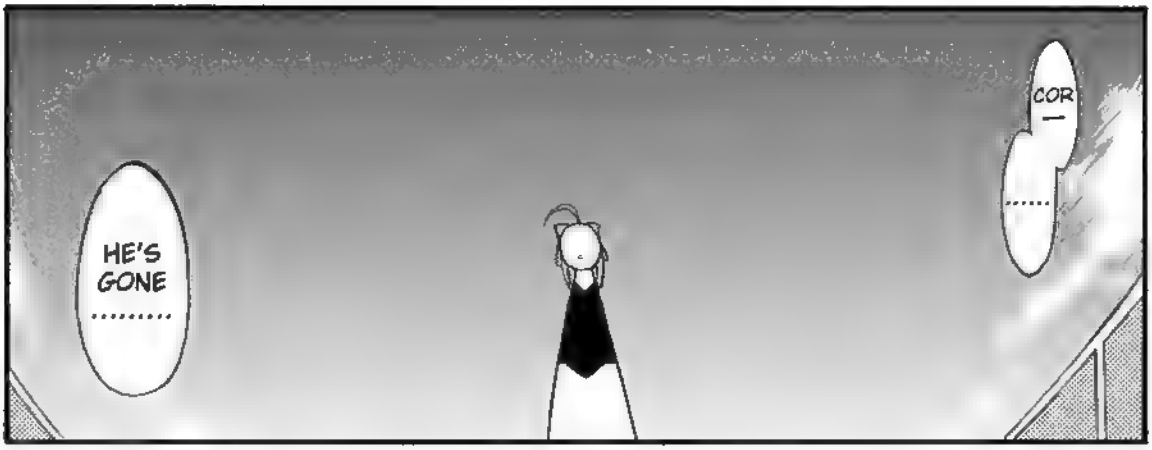
PICTURE: TEACH ME, O GREAT ONE!!

"THE IMPURE WHO VIOLATE OUR JUSTICE ARE NOT TO BE GIVEN LEAVE." THAT'S PART OF OUR DOCTRINE.
...ANY AND ALL WARPED BEINGS WHO HOLD GRUDGES AGAINST THE WORLD.
IT MEANS THAT WE HAVE TO TOTALLY ERADICATE FROM THIS LIFE...
AND AT THE TOP OF THE LIST ...
...ARE THE SCORNED AND HATED "SHIKABANE."


SHIKA-BANE?
WHEN PEOPLE ...
...EXPIRE BEFORE THEIR TIME, FACING DEATH AT THE HANDS OF ACCIDENT, DISEASE, OR WHAT HAVE YOU...
IF A NUMBER OF OTHER CONDITIONS ARE ALSO MET, THEY GAIN...
WIPE
WIPE
"LINGERING REGRETS."
THEY EMIT THOSE REGRETS LIKE AN ENERGY, REANIMATING THEIR DEAD BODIES.

THEY BECOME "SHIKABANE."
THE LIVING DEAD .....
...YOU COULD THINK OF THEM AS ZOMBIES.

THEY'RE THE ULTIMATE IN WARPED, UNNATURAL PHENOMENA.
AND THEY'RE THE REASON I'M HERE.
TO PUT THOSE UNNATURAL BEINGS BACK WHERE THEY BELONG.
I EXIST FOR THAT REASON ALONE.
I AND OTHERS LIKE ME ARE .....
CLOSE
STEP STEP
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
...


HE'S GONE .....
COR —
.....

AH. THAT WAS CRAZY.
DAD SURE KNEW SOME WEIRD PEOPLE .....
NOT THAT WELL, THOUGH, OBVIOUSLY.

HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH.
EH?
WHY'RE YOU HIDING?
HOW'D IT GO, TAKA-MASA?
YOUR CLANDESTINE DATE WITH ITSUKI-CHAN ON THE ROOF, THAT IS .....?
OH... WELL ...
...I'VE HEARD THAT IN NARA, THEY CALL STAG BEETLES TURTLES.
EVEN THOUGH THEY REALLY ARE STAG BEETLES
HUH?
OPEN
FLUTTER
!
FLUTTER
BYE-BYE.
SEE YA.
IF YOU DON'T HEAD TO THE BACK OF THE SCHOOL BUILDING WITHIN ONE MINUTE OF READING THIS LETTER, I'LL MAKE SURE YOU'RE CRYING TEARS OF BLOOD.
-MAGICAL EXCHANGE STUDENT, ITSUKI YAMAGAMI
WHAT .....?
YEAH .....
WOBBLE
OH YEAH?
SEE YA, THEN, TAKA-MASA.
JUST REMEMBERED SOMETHING I GOTTA DO ...
.....
SORRY.
GLOOM
HMM?
WHAT IS IT?

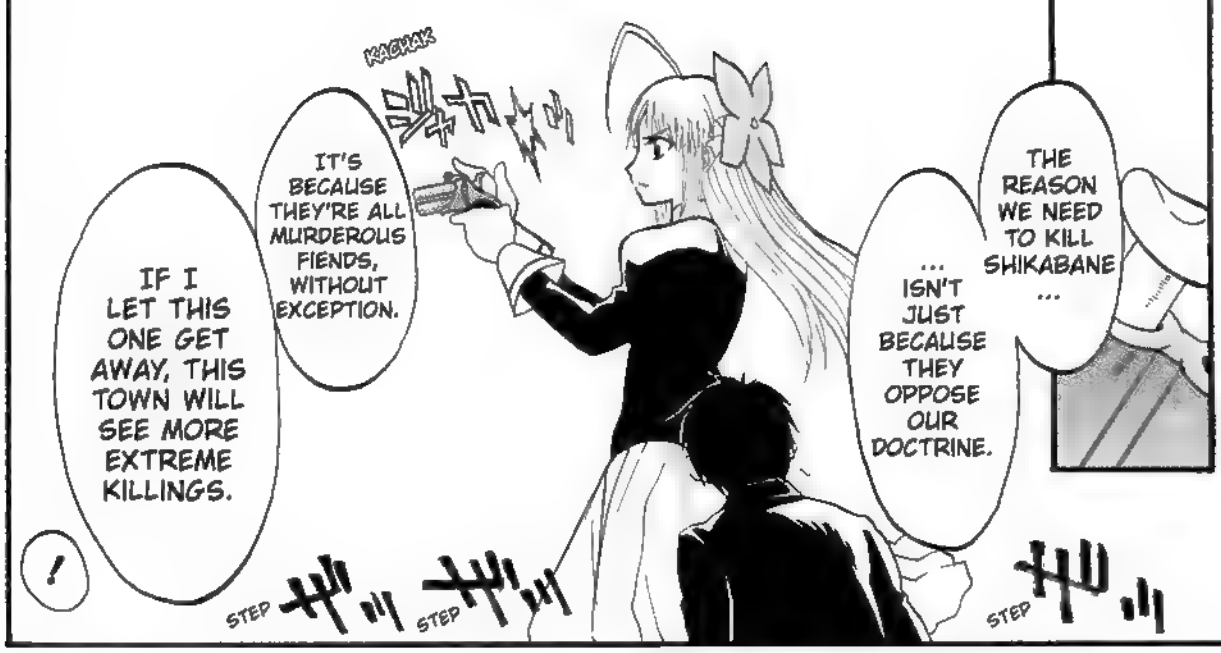
BETWEEN THE MAIN BUILDING AND CLUB BUILDINGS, IT'S WEIRD HOW BIG THIS CAMPUS IS.....
NOW... WHERE TO?
SIGH...
HM?
WHAT'S WRONG, TAKAMASA-SAN?
AHH .....
UM, YOU'RE TOMO-HARU'S LITTLE SISTER .....
I'M TOUKA.
I RARELY SEE YOU AROUND THE HUMANITIES CLUB BUILDINGS.
YOU'RE NOT IN ANY CLUB, ARE YOU?
AS A MEMBER OF THE CARETAKER CLUB, I'M ALWAYS STAYING LATE TO WATCH AFTER THESE LITTLE GUYS.
MM ...
SCRATCH
I'M WON-DERING ...
YOU HAVEN'T SEEN A GIRL WITH AN UNUSUAL UNIFORM AROUND HERE, HAVE YOU?
SHE'D PROBABLY BE LOITERING AROUND HERE.....
?
AN UNUSUAL UNIFORM ?
LET ME THINK ...
HMM...

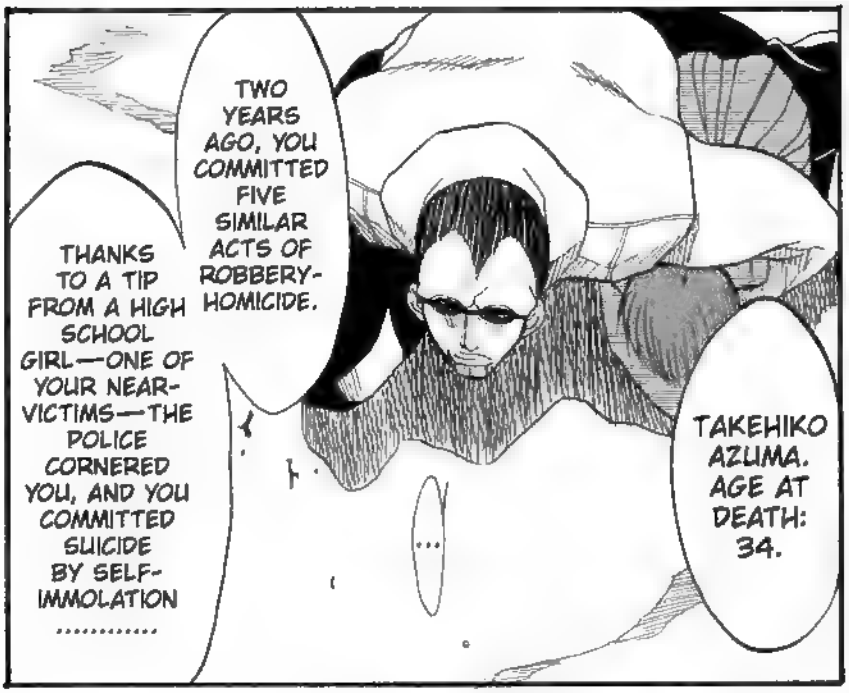
RIGHT. I ACTUALLY SAW SOMEONE LIKE THAT RUNNING NEAR THE ENTRYWAY.
SHE LOOKED REALLY... EVIL.
WITH A FACE LIKE A MURDERER'S.
KYAHHHHHHHHHH!!
AH..... LOOKS LIKE TROUBLE NO MATTER WHAT I SAY...
SIGH.
MM ...
GOT IT.
?
... THOUGH I'M NOT ACTUALLY SURE WHAT SHE'LL DO TO ME...
THANKS.
I'LL GO CHECK ...
THUD
WHAT WAS .....
?
CREAK
!
.....
TOUKA-CHAN .....?

DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
!
RIP
.....

!?
SLAM
.....MM...
NNN.....
CRACK
.....
SHH...
KUH
.....IS THIS...
NO WAY.....
NNN!!
CRACK
CRACK
CRACK
...!!
WHO IS THIS GUY.....?
.....WHAT THE—!?
...NN!!
CRUNCH

BURST
...!!
GAHHH!!
...COUGH!!
!!
LEAP
THUMP
THANKS FOR SAVING ME THE EXPLANATION.
PLINK
PLINK
STAND
THAT'S A SHIKABANE, TAKAMASA.


KACHAK
IT'S BECAUSE THEY'RE ALL MURDEROUS FIENDS, WITHOUT EXCEPTION.
IF I LET THIS ONE GET AWAY, THIS TOWN WILL SEE MORE EXTREME KILLINGS.
!
STEP
STEP
... ISN'T JUST BECAUSE THEY OPPOSE OUR DOCTRINE.
THE REASON WE NEED TO KILL SHIKABANE ...
STEP


TWO YEARS AGO, YOU COMMITTED FIVE SIMILAR ACTS OF ROBBERY-HOMICIDE.
THANKS TO A TIP FROM A HIGH SCHOOL GIRL—ONE OF YOUR NEAR-VICTIMS—THE POLICE CORNERED YOU, AND YOU COMMITTED SUICIDE BY SELF-IMMOLATION .....
...
TAKEHIKO AZUMA. AGE AT DEATH: 34.

A GUN..... A REAL ONE.....
NOW .....

TWINGE
TWINGE
SHE BLEW MY COVER AND HELPED THEM TRAP ME.....
SHE WAS WEARING THE SAME UNIFORM AS THIS HERE GIRLIE.....BUT THAT OTHER ONE GOT AWAY.....
GRIND
... THAT'S RIGHT.

I SUPPOSE THE TROUBLE I WENT THROUGH TO TRANSFER HERE WASN'T A WASTE AFTER ALL .....
I SEE ...
SO THAT EXPLAINS WHY YOU'VE BEEN TARGETING STUDENTS FROM THIS SCHOOL.
THAT'S WHY.....I GOUGE OUT THEIR EYES BEFORE KILLING 'EM.
YOU'RE DEAD, TOO.....FOR GETTING IN MY WAY.
I'LL NEVER FORGIVE THAT .....
CRUNCH
YOU PLANNING TO FIGHT ME WITH THAT GIRL IN HAND .....?
... WELL?
FWOOM
!
THUD
.....

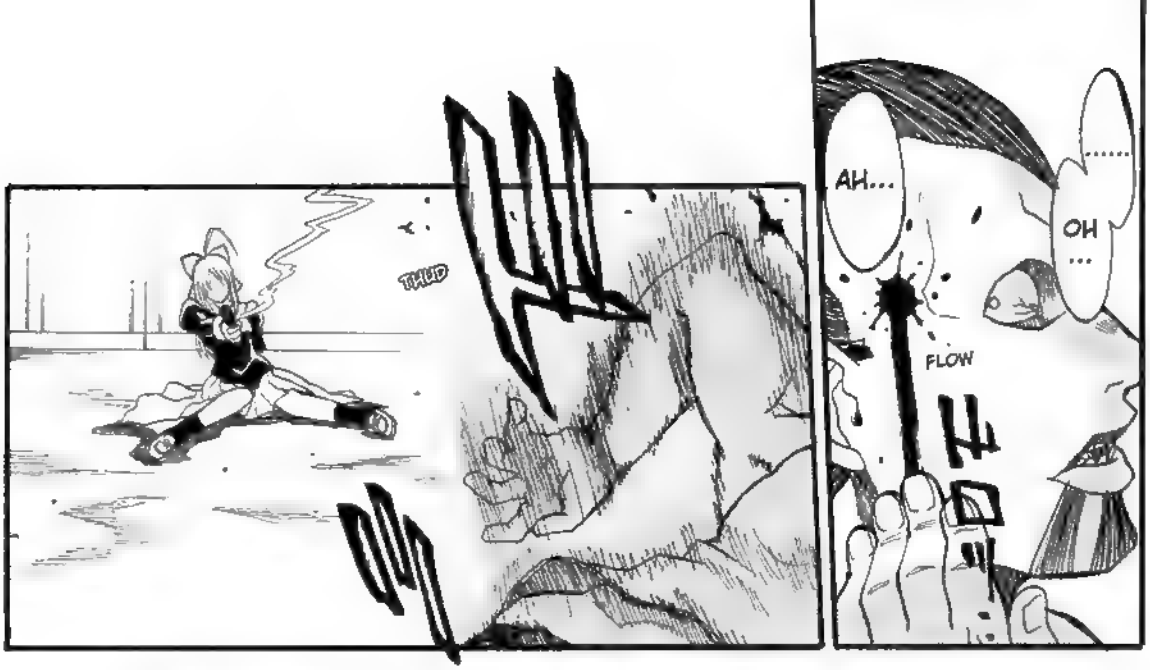
FLIK
DIVE
THE RABBIT!?
DAMN... WHILE I WAS HESITATING TO PULL THE TRIGGER.....
!!
SPLATTER
.....
BLAM

GRAB
WHOOSH
TCH
CHAK
BURST
BOOM
BOOM
AHH
HAA.

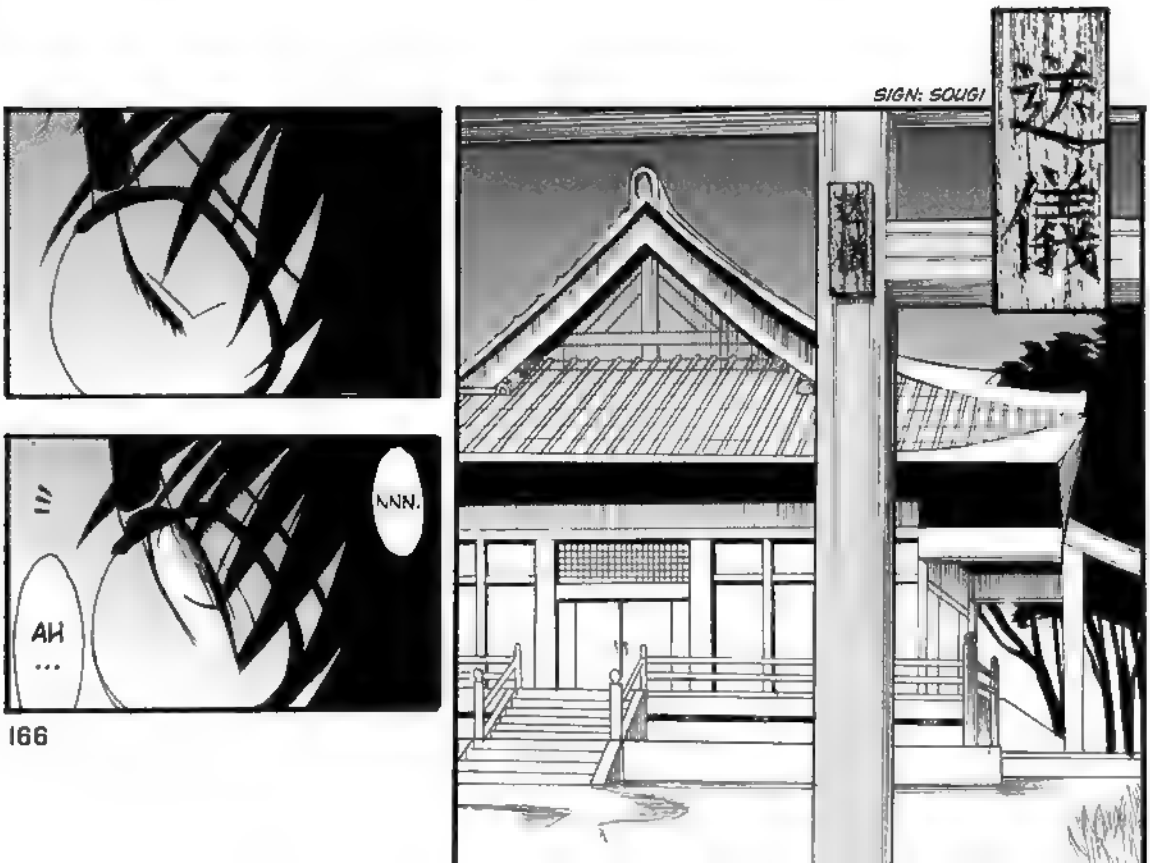
YOU...
...BLEW OFF MY ARM, DIDN'T YOU.....
GRIP
HEH HEH HEH .....
HEH .....
GRIND
...!!
AHHHHHH!
AH.....
AHH...
CRACK
CRACK
CRACK
POP
みき、みき、め ぱき
RIP
!!
WRENCH

HAA
.....
SKID
GAHH
.....
HAA
.....
SPLATTER
HEH
.....
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
HEH
HEH
HEH
HEH
HEH
.....
DRIP
DRIP
.....
TWINGE
YOU
.....!!
GRAB

CRACK
!?
AHH
.....
.....
HAA.
SHINK
POP


THUD
AH...
.....
OH ...
FLOW

HAA ...
HAA.
HAA.


SIGN: SOUGI
葬儀
NNN.
AH ...

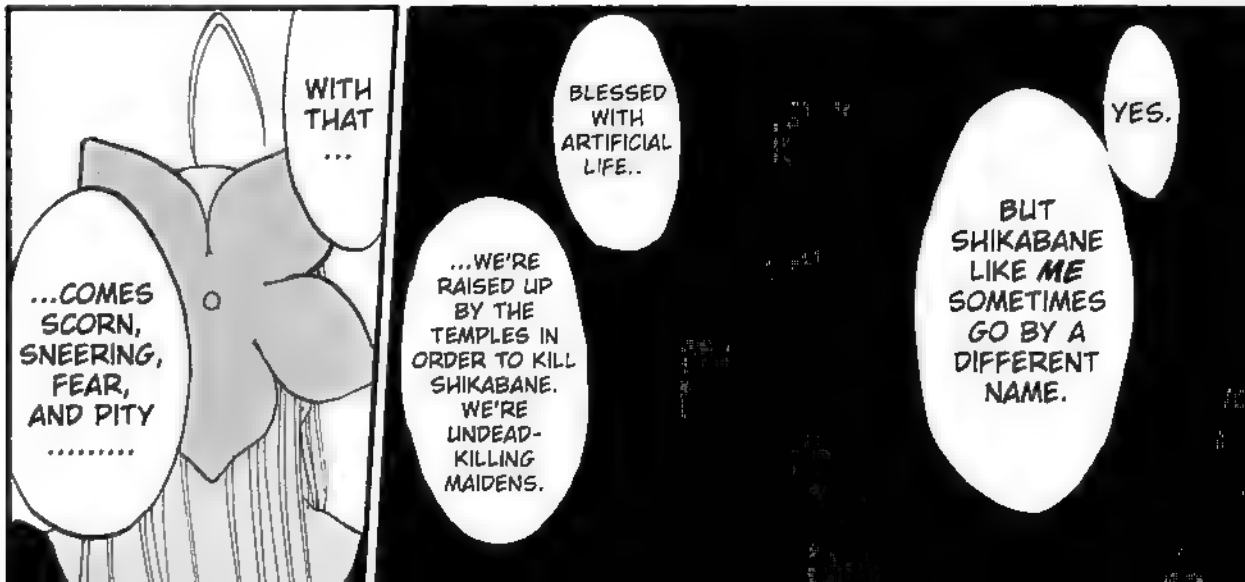
TURN
!!
BREATHE
STIFF

WAIT!! I HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING WRONG, SO I SHOULD JUST KEEP LYING HERE...I'LL TURN AROUND REEEEALLY SLOWLY, LIKE IN TAI CHI...
IT'S A TRAP!!!
CALM DOWN, ME!!

HHHH!
WAHHH!
...HI...
ROLL

HAA.
HAA.
AFTER CARRYING YOU TWO ALL THE WAY BACK TO THE TEMPLE .....
I'M REALLY, REALLY, WORN-OUT.
RUB
..... COME ON.
PLEASE DON'T SHOUT LIKE THAT.
... AH.
RIGHT.
THANKS.....
YOU CARRIED BOTH OF US? WOW.....
..... BUT WHY HER TOO ...?
I SHOT HIM IN THE HEAD, BUT IT WAS FAR FROM A KILLING BLOW. HE GOT AWAY .....
BITE
I'M IN NO CONDITION TO CHASE AFTER HIM, SO I DECIDED TO COME BACK HERE.....
AH.
.....
TAKA-MASA..... THAT GUY'S STILL NOT DEAD.
HE'LL COME AFTER HER AGAIN IF WE DO NOTHING.
R-RIGHT!! YAMA-GAMI!! YOUR LEFT ARM!?
A-ARE YOU OKAY!? DID YOU GET IT BACK !?
.....

WAHHHHHH.
SECOND TIME TODAY.
!!
ぶらーん
DANGLE
YEAH. .....IT'S RIGHT THERE.
...
SO THEY ...
... REALLY EXIST.
THAT'S HOW SHIKABANE WORK.
AND I'M ONE OF THEM.
CRACK
CRACK
コキ
コキ
MY ARM'S FINE. I CAN JUST REATTACH IT.
I CAN BE RIPPED TO PIECES, BUT IF MY BRAIN'S INTACT, I WON'T DIE.
THERE... THAT'LL DO IT.
TUG
I'M STILL A BEGINNER AT THIS, YOU SEE .....
ARM... YOUR ARM..


WITH THAT ...
...COMES SCORN, SNEERING, FEAR, AND PITY .....
...WE'RE RAISED UP BY THE TEMPLES IN ORDER TO KILL SHIKABANE. WE'RE UNDEAD-KILLING MAIDENS.
BLESSED WITH ARTIFICIAL LIFE..
YES.
BUT SHIKABANE LIKE ME SOMETIMES GO BY A DIFFERENT NAME.

THEY CALL US ...
...CORPSE PRINCESSES.
.....
IN TRUTH .....
I..... MADE A MISTAKE ...

I MADE A CONTRACT WITH YOU WITHOUT EXPLAINING MYSELF, TAKAMASA .....
I'M SORRY ...
SO... ALL I WAS THINKING AT THE TIME... WAS HOW TO KEEP MYSELF FROM FALLING BEHIND ...
YOU SEE, I REQUIRE A "CONTRACT" .....
CORPSE PRINCESSES NEED TO BE CONTRACTED WITH STRONG MONKS WHO BEAR THE "GENPAKU" TITLE...

...BUT I'M FINE NOW. I'M HEALED.
SQUEEZE
IT'S MY TURN TO GO ON THE OFFENSE.
WITHOUT A CONTRACT, MY POWER WOULD RETURN TO NORMAL AND I'D CEASE TO BE UNDEAD .....
AND IF MY CONTRACTOR ISN'T BY MY SIDE, I CAN'T HEAL TERRIBLE WOUNDS.
FOR CORPSE PRINCESSES.....THE CONTRACT IS A SWITCH, AND THE CONTRACTOR IS A BATTERY.
STRONG BATTERIES ARE OBVIOUSLY BETTER.
..... BUT WHY ...
...IS A "CONTRACT" SO NECESSARY .....?

WHA— W- WAIT A SECOND !!
OFFENSE? YOU CAN'T MEAN YOU'RE GOING ALONE, YAMAGAMI !?
THAT GUY SEEMED REALLY, REALLY DANGER-OUS!
BUT...
EARLIER... I JUST GOT A BIT CARELESS. ..... ALSO...
I DIDN'T HAVE THEM AT THE TIME. ...MY SPECIAL GUNS.
...THIS TIME...

...I'LL BE SURE ...
...TO KILL HIM.
SHUDDER
B-BUT YOU'RE JUST GONNA LEAVE ME HERE WITH LITTLE MS. CLUELESS?
GYAK
!?

GULP
YAMA-GAMI
.....
TAKA-MASA.
DYING IS A SCARY THING .....
I DIED IN AN ACCIDENT ONE YEAR AGO.
I REMEMBER THE FLOWING BLOOD. GROWING COLD. THE PAIN. THE UTTER DESPAIR.
BUT ...
I DECIDED TO BECOME A CORPSE PRINCESS.
YOU'VE GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS WORLD, SO YOU CAN'T JOIN ME.
.....
BUT I...
I HAVE DIFFERENT OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO ME.
BUT IF YOU DIE, TAKAMASA, I'M DONE FOR.
STEP
SO ...
SLIDE

...YOU STAY HERE AND WATCH OVER HER.
UNTIL I KILL HIM AND RETURN ...
WAIT .....
!!
ZOOM
...I REALLY APPRE-CIATED IT.
YOUR HELP EARLIER ...
... WHY ...
... AREN'T I CHASING AFTER HER...?
MY LEGS ARE FROZEN .....
.....
CLENCH
SHIT .....

OVER HERE ...
TWITCH
TAP
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
TRACK-ING ME BY SCENT ALONE... YOU MUST HAVE A GOOD NOSE.
...OH WELL...
... THIS TIME, I'LL MAKE SURE TO BLAST IT RIGHT OFF YOUR FACE.
THE PERFECT WEAPONS TO GOUGE OUT EYES AND CAUSE A PAINFUL DEATH.
SPIKES ...?
RIP
RIP
..... BUT ...
..... YOU'RE DEAD !!
CRUNCH

FLAP
THESE ARE MY SPECIALTY M945 SUTRA GUNS.
MANTRAS ARE CARVED ON THE OUTSIDE AND INSIDE OF THE BARREL. JUST LIKE THE PRAYER WHEELS OF TIBET'S BUDDHIST TEMPLES.
EVERY BULLET FIRED IS CONSECRATED AND IMBUED WITH DIVINITY .....
SAVES ME THE TROUBLE OF CHANTING TO YOU.

TWINGE
FLIK
GRAGK
BOOM
CLICK
WHOOSH

BOOM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
HMPH...
WHOOSH
LEAP
BLAM

STRAIN
STRAIN
WHAM
SWIPE
DUCK
GAH.

SLIDE
BAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
CLICK
SPLATTER
SPLATTER
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM

SLAM
...MY FIRST REAL BATTLE, AND I .....
THIS WAS.....
HAA
HAA.
HE'S DOWN .....
HAA.
SHAKE
SHAKE
HAA.
HAA.
SPLURT
...WON .....?

WH-WHAT.....?
M-MY NECK'S BEEN SLASHED
.....
C-CAN'T BREATHE... HOW'D HE
.....
!!
HAA
DRIP
SPLURT
THUD
DRIP
...SET THIS..... TRAP.....
MORE THAN..... JUST THROWING THOSE SPIKES, HE...
BLACK STEEL WIRE
.....
CREEP
CREEP
CREEP
CREEP
CREEP
DRP
SCRATCH
RISE
!!

YANK
SQUOOSH
OOZE
SHOOTING AT ME AND GETTING COCKY, FILLING ME WITH HOLES LIKE THAT.
THAT'LL COST YAH...
SQUOOSH
PIERCE
.....HEHEHEH...
THAT WAS MEAN, GIRL.

YANK
YANK
...YOU'VE HURT ME THE MOST. SO NOW YOU DIE.
OUT OF ALL THE LITTLE SHITS THAT'VE COME TO KILL ME
.....

.....
...AHH.
STAB
LEAP
!!

GLANCE
!!
DODGE FOR YOUR LIFE!!
TAKE THIS !!
FLIK
HEE-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA!!
CLANG
CLANG
TCH !!
CLANG
TWITCH
STAB

I WAS HOPING... TO GET *BOTH* AT ONCE.....
TCH. CLOSE ONE.
.....
DRIP
HAA.
HAA.
PULL
TCH.
BOOM
...JUST ONE MORE WAVE... AND YOU'RE DONE.
STING
BUT NOW.....
WHOOSH
TOO SLOW.

STAB
STAB
STAB
STAB
...!!
CRASH
SLIDE
THUD
SLIDE
.....
AHH.
HAA
.....
.....

DANGLE
SURE, YOU CAN FIRE A GUN...
...BUT YOU'RE STILL A KID WHO DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO KILL.
WEAK.
STEP
PATHETIC TRASH.
STEP
TMP
TCH .....
DRIP
DRIP
HAA... NNN.
HE'S RIGHT.
HAA.
HAA.
WHY I SOUGHT OUT A BOND WITH A STRONG MONK.
HAA .....
STRAIN
HAA.
THAT'S WHY I SOUGHT OUT A GEN-PAKU.
CRAWL
HAA
HAA.
THAT'S WHY...
I KNOW I'M WEAK AND NOT READY FOR THIS.

.....
I'M SO PA-THET-IC.
BECAUSE I THOUGHT I COULDN'T FIGHT AND KILL.....
BECAUSE I'VE NEVER REALLY FOUGHT ANYONE BEFORE .....
... PARALYZED BY MY OWN FEAR OF DEATH.
I'M ...
INSTEAD OF WORRYING ABOUT TAKAMASA AND THE GIRL, I'M ONLY WORRIED ABOUT MYSELF NOW.
...I'M SCARED ...
I CAN'T DENY IT...
STAB
...OF DYING.

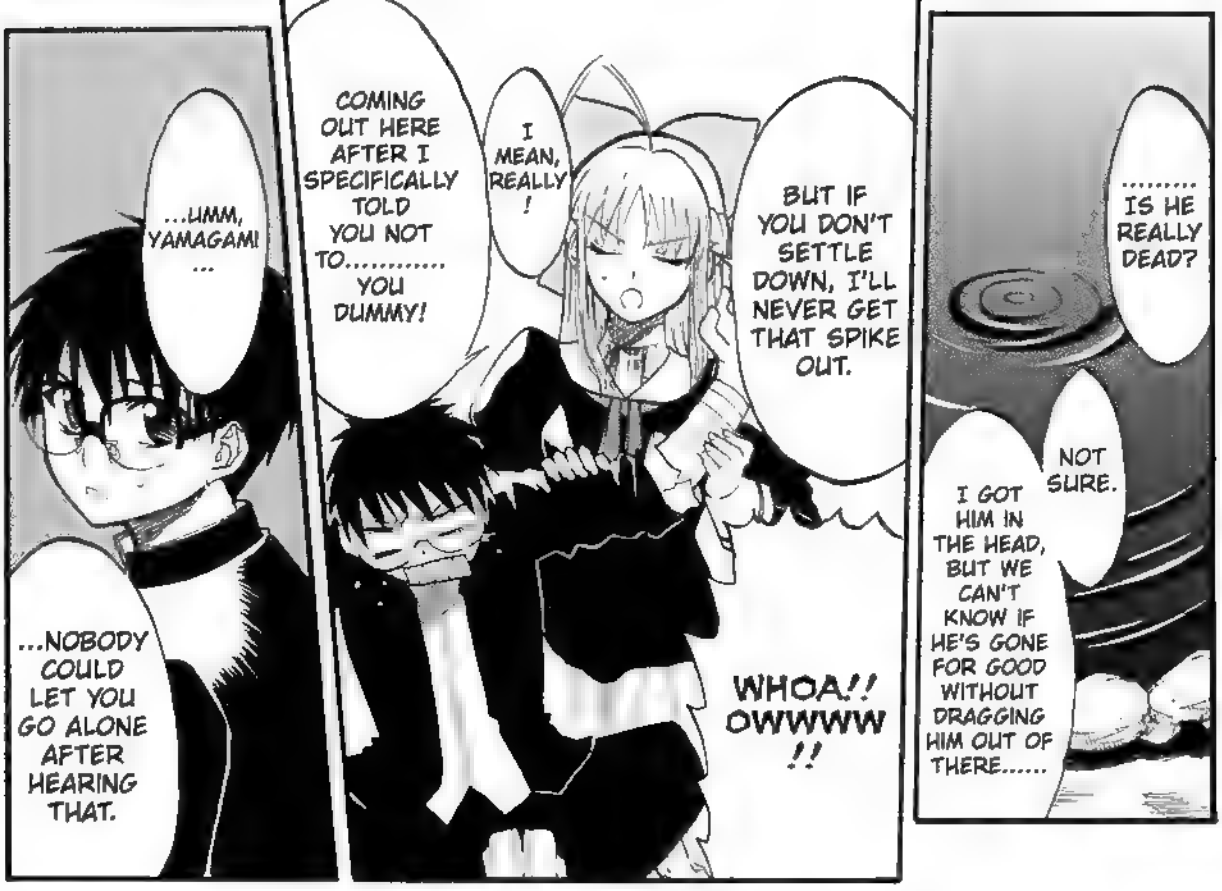
SPLURT

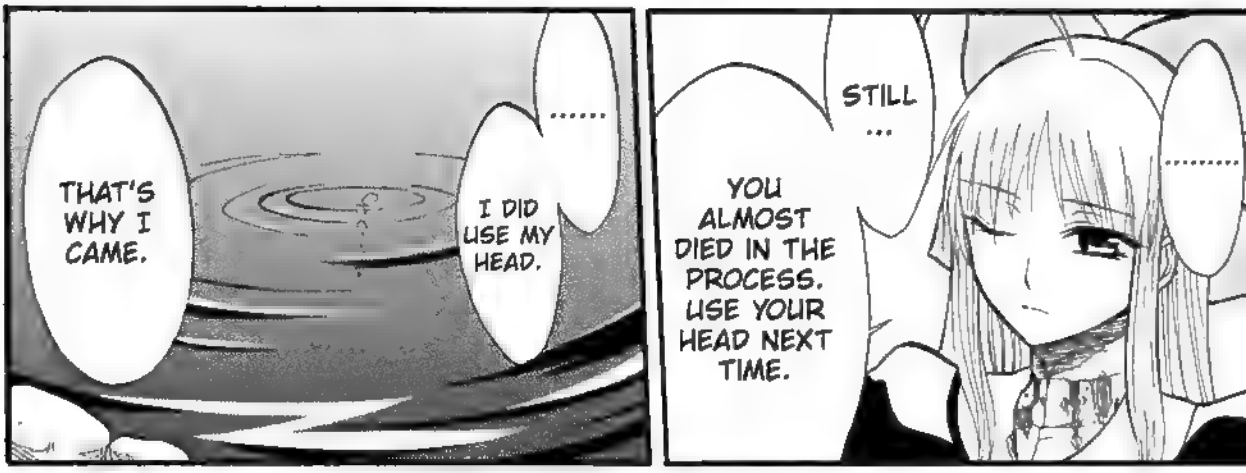
STEP
FWIP

!?
THIS IS...?
SPLASH
SMACK
CRACK
!!
KACHAK
.....
YAMA-GAMI !!
THE KIND OF THING THAT'D EVEN REACT TO A SPARK FROM A REFRIGERATOR LIGHTBULB.
SOME ETHANOL I USE FOR STERIL-IZATION AT HOME.
TMP
FLAP

BOOM
BOOM
FLIK
GWAHH!!
BLAM
BLAM
SPLASH
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
FOOM
GAHH.
GAHHHH.

STAND
AH ...
.....
.....
TAKA ...
... MASA ...?
.....
I'VE BEEN STABBED!! LOOK AT THAT BLOOD!! LOOK AT IT!!
SPLURT
...
OWWWW-WWWW!!! THIS REALLY HURTS!!
!
... RIGHT ?
I CAN ONLY IMAGINE HOW BADLY DYING WOULD HURT .....
IF THIS SORT OF THING HURTS THIS BADLY .....
..... BUT ...
HIC.
HAA...
.....


.....
IS HE REALLY DEAD?
NOT SURE.
I GOT HIM IN THE HEAD, BUT WE CAN'T KNOW IF HE'S GONE FOR GOOD WITHOUT DRAGGING HIM OUT OF THERE.....
BUT IF YOU DON'T SETTLE DOWN, I'LL NEVER GET THAT SPIKE OUT.
I MEAN, REALLY!
COMING OUT HERE AFTER I SPECIFICALLY TOLD YOU NOT TO..... YOU DUMMY!
WHOA!! OWWWW!!
...UMM, YAMAGAMI...
...NOBODY COULD LET YOU GO ALONE AFTER HEARING THAT.


.....
STILL...
.....
YOU ALMOST DIED IN THE PROCESS. USE YOUR HEAD NEXT TIME.
.....
I DID USE MY HEAD.
THAT'S WHY I CAME.

I..... DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT YOU, YAMAGAMI.
NOT ABOUT CORPSE PRINCESSES, OR EVEN MY OWN TEMPLE.
OR WHY YOU CHOSE TO BECOME A CORPSE PRINCESS...

I FELT I HAD TO COME HELP. IT WASN'T MUCH OF A CHOICE.
EVEN SO.....
BUT...
I COULDN'T JUST STAND IDLY BY WHILE SOMEONE WAS FIGHTING TO PROTECT MY LIFE.
.....IT'S NOT THAT I WANTED TO DIE OR THAT I DON'T VALUE MY LIFE.
..... THAT IS, I REALLY DON'T WANT TO DIE.
AND IF...
...IF YOU DIED IN THE PROCESS... I'D...
...I'D KINDA ...
...I'D FEEL AWFUL !!

MUTTER
LOOKING AFTER GIRLS IS A MAN'S ...
IT'S LIKE MY FATHER USED TO SAY.
MUTTER
I MEAN, I'M NOT THE TYPE TO TALK BIG, BUT .....
KINDA!!
I DON'T REALLY KNOW, THOUGH!
.....
"KINDA"?
FOR WHATEVER REASON!!
...
.....

DUMMY.

!!
BURST
!!!
I'LL..... RIP YOUR EYES FROM THEIR SOCKETS!! I'LL TEAR YOUR GUTS OUT!!
YOU'RE DEAD.
HAA.
BRATS ...
YOU BRATS !!
HAA.
DOOM
I'VE GOT A PLAN.
EH.
.....!
YAMA-GAMI. LISTEN TO ME.
..... HE'S A PER-SIST-ENT ONE!
EARLIER..... WHEN I WAS TOO FROZEN TO CHASE AFTER YOU...
...ALL I COULD THINK ABOUT WAS HIM KILLING YOU.....
STEP
I... ... WELL, I NOTICED SOME-THING.

.....
BUT
...
TMP
TMP
!!
...ISN'T AS HARD AS IT SEEMS .....
...IT TURNS OUT THAT FACING YOUR PROBLEMS HEAD-ON LIKE THIS .....
STEP
WHAM
TCH
...
UGH
...
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
GRGL
.....

NO WEAPON AND NO PLAN.....
JUST THROWING PUNCHES .....?
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
GRAB
GAHH...
.....
YOU AN IDIOT?
...HAA.
STEP
ONE I GOT FROM YOU.
OH, I'VE GOT A WEAPON .....
COUGH
..... HEH..... HA-HA-HA-HA ...
HAA ...
NOW ...
TUG
GRIT THOSE TEETH.
WIRE .....!?
MY WIRE.....
!?
SWISH
WA—
WAIT...!!

YANK
SLICE
SLICE
GAHHH...
GAH...
SFX: SPURT SPURT
LEAP
...HON-ESTLY.
YOU'RE ONE RECKLESS GUY, AREN'T YOU?
TAP

BUT I CAN'T SAY...
...I DON'T LIKE IT.
TWISH
.....
YAMAGAMI.
THEN YOU FINISH HIM WITH YOUR GUNS.
...I'LL BE FINE.
TMP
I'LL BE THE BAIT AND PIN HIM DOWN.
DUMMY.
A "GENPAKU" IS A STRONG MONK, RIGHT?

FWUMP
AHHHHH!
TAP
TAP
SCRATCH
.....AH.
TAKA-
MASA
.....
WHEN PUSH COMES TO SHOVE, YOU PUT YOUR LIFE ON THE LINE WITHOUT FEAR...
CLICK
RIP
RIP
YOU REALLY ARE A GENPAKU, TAKAMASA.

BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BOOM

I'LL DO MY BEST TO EMULATE YOU.
SO AT LEAST I CAN FIGHT WITH MY HEAD HELD HIGH .....

...CORPSE PRINCESS.

SMASH

BECAUSE ...

CLICK

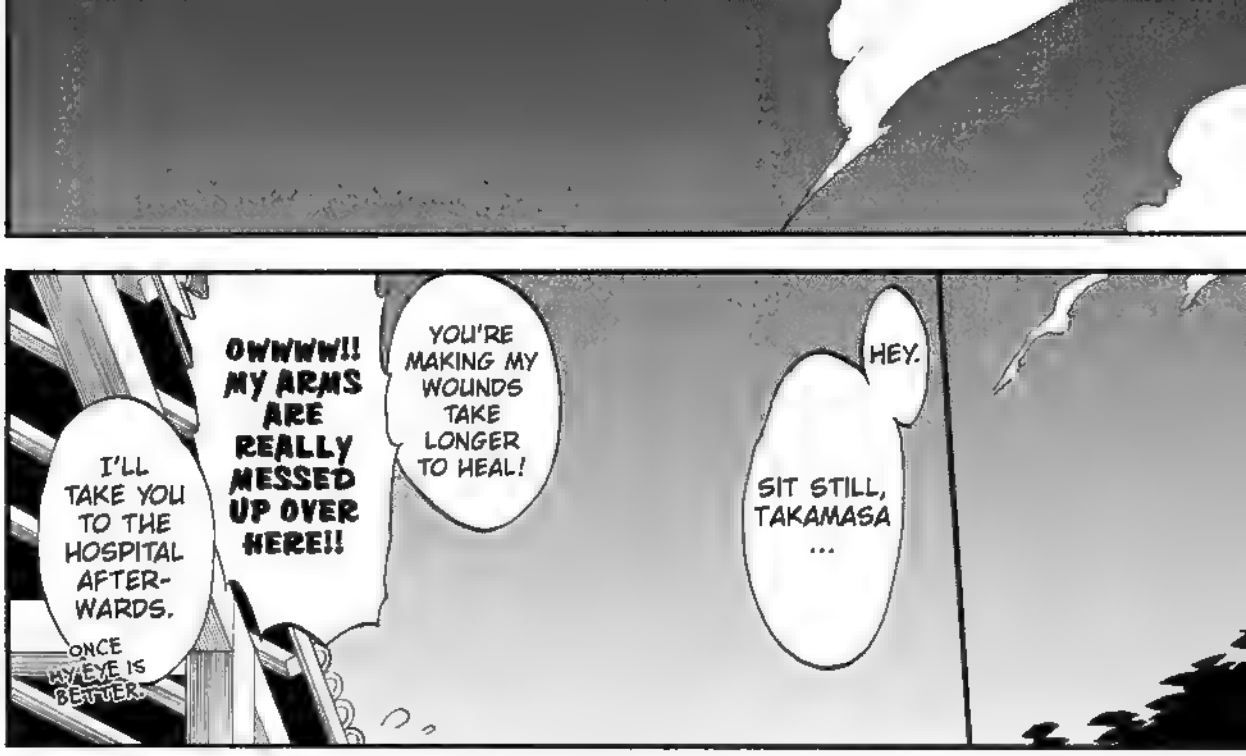
...I'M A...

...AH.

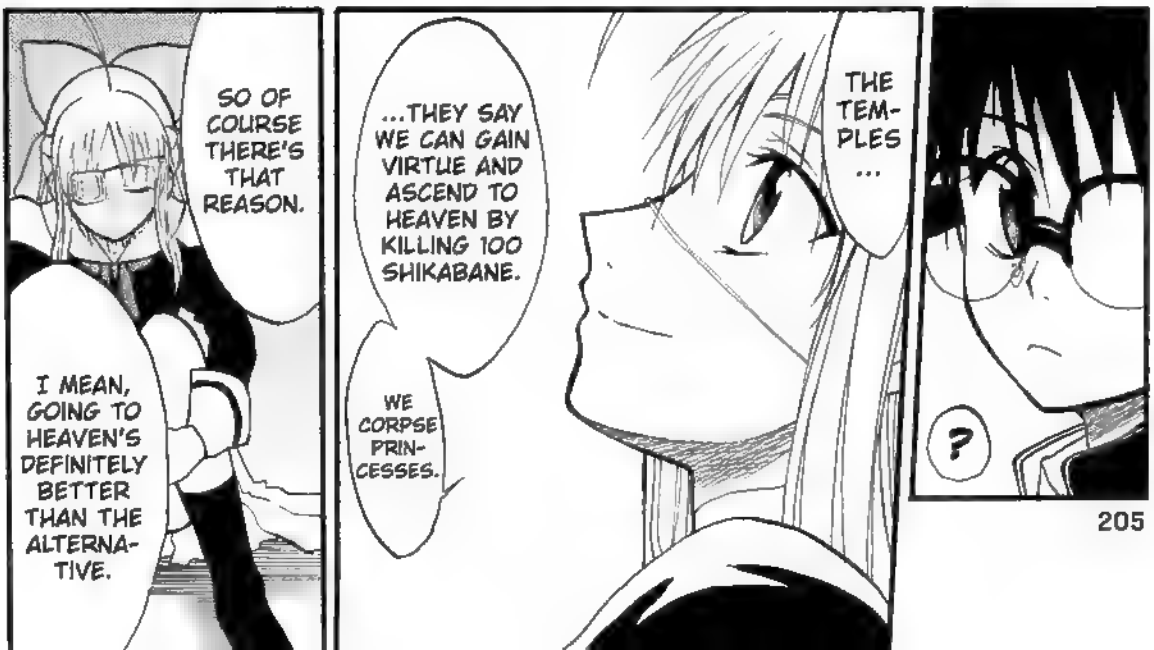
...GASP...

BECAUSE
...
...I'M A...
...AH.
...GAHH...

SMASH
..CORPSE PRINCESS.


HEY.
SIT STILL, TAKAMASA ...
YOU'RE MAKING MY WOUNDS TAKE LONGER TO HEAL!
OWWWW!! MY ARMS ARE REALLY MESSED UP OVER HERE!!
I'LL TAKE YOU TO THE HOSPITAL AFTER-WARDS.
ONCE MY EYE IS BETTER.

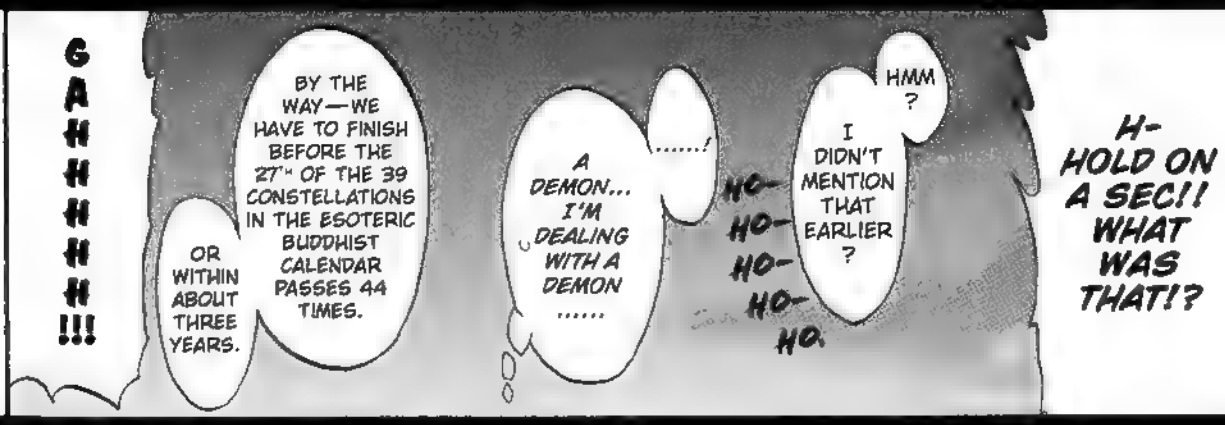
...HEY.
EARLIER I SAID IT DIDN'T MATTER IF I WAS CLUELESS ABOUT ALL THIS ...
YEAH ?
...BUT WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO BECOME A CORPSE PRINCESS, YAMAGAMI?
.....
WELL ...
... BECAUSE I HADN'T DONE ANYTHING YET.


?
THE TEM-PLES ...
...THEY SAY WE CAN GAIN VIRTUE AND ASCEND TO HEAVEN BY KILLING 100 SHIKABANE.
WE CORPSE PRIN-CESSES.
SO OF COURSE THERE'S THAT REASON.
I MEAN, GOING TO HEAVEN'S DEFINITELY BETTER THAN THE ALTERNA-TIVE.

BUT IN TRUTH ...
...I JUST WANTED A LITTLE MORE LIFE .....
MORE CHANCES TO DO THINGS I'D MISSED ...
GOING TO SCHOOL LIKE A NORMAL GIRL.....
.....
?
OR FALL-ING IN LOVE ...
OR FA—
O-OR EATING ICE CREAM UNTIL I'M SICK AND READY TO BURST.
LIKE A NORMAL SCHOOLGIRL!
BEFORE DYING, I'D ONLY EVER HAD A SINGLE CUP EACH OF HÄAGEN-DAZS AND AYA-
CLENCH
...
IS THAT SO?
... RIGHT.
I HEAR YOU.
I'M HAPPY TO HELP.
WE'RE CON-NECTED NOW. I CAN'T JUST IGNORE THAT.
.....
THANK YOU.
TAKAMASA.

CORPSE PRINCESS: ITSUKI YAMAGAMI (AGE AT DEATH: 15)

CAUSE OF DEATH:
RIPPED IN TWO DURING A TRAFFIC ACCIDENT (VEHICULAR MANSLAUGHTER)


GAHHHHHH!!!
OR WITHIN ABOUT THREE YEARS.
BY THE WAY—WE HAVE TO FINISH BEFORE THE 27TH OF THE 39 CONSTELLATIONS IN THE ESOTERIC BUDDHIST CALENDAR PASSES 44 TIMES.
A DEMON... I'M DEALING WITH A DEMON .....
.....!
HO- HO- HO- HO- HO.
HMM ?
I DIDN'T MENTION THAT EARLIER ?
H-HOLD ON A SEC!! WHAT WAS THAT!?

CORPSE PRINCESS RULES:
① BY KILLING 100 SHIKABANE, A CORPSE PRINCESS CAN ASCEND TO HEAVEN.
② SHE MUST FIND A CONTRACTOR AND ACCOMPLISH ① WITHIN A SET TIME (QUITTING PARTWAY THROUGH IS NOT PERMITTED).
③ NO EXCUSES. EVEN IN THE CASE OF DEATH.

OKAY, I'M SORRY!!
SHUT UP!! I'M TRYING TO BE POSITIVE HERE, SO JUST LISTEN TO ME!!
WHACK
NO—
AHHH!
WE'LL JUST WORK HARD AND DO OUR BEST TO FIND HAPPINESS.
WELL.
I'M SURE WE'LL BE FINE.

FOLLOW THOSE RULES AND WORK HARD TO REACH HEAVEN.

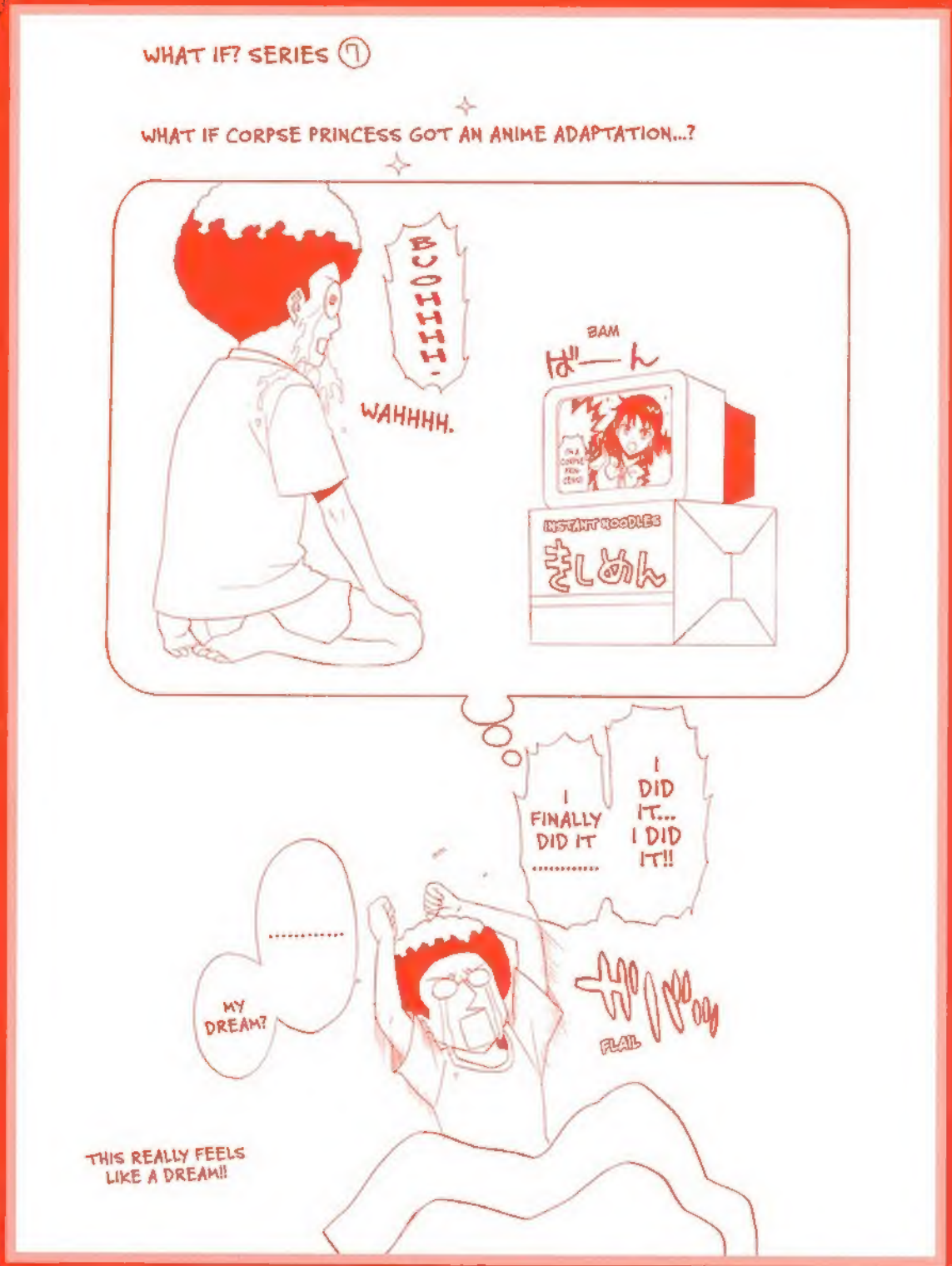
100 KILLS MEANS A TICKET TO HEAVEN.

AND THIS GIRL...

I THOUGHT THEY WERE COOL!!
SHOCK
EHH!! NO WAY!!
...THOSE GUNS ARE KIND OF CREEPY.
THEY REMIND ME OF HOICHI THE EARLESS.
...I'VE BEEN MEANING TO SAY THIS, BUT...

...HAS 99 TO GO.

CORPSE PRINCESS



AKAHITO YOSHIICHI

TOUMA SAWAMIYA

HEIGHT: 174 CM WEIGHT: 56 KG
BLOOD TYPE: AB
BIRTHDAY: SEPTEMBER 13TH
AGE AT DEATH: 20
FAVORITE THINGS:
DOGS, SUBMISSIVE THINGS
LEAST FAVORITE THINGS:
CATS, FICKLE THINGS
SPECIAL ABILITIES: TOP BREEDER WHO'S TRAINED A SURPRISING NUMBER OF DOGS

KANECHIKA UMEHARA

HEIGHT: 173 CM WEIGHT: 76 KG
BLOOD TYPE: B
BIRTHDAY: FEBRUARY 18TH AGE: 34
FAVORITE THINGS:
ZENBUNOSE SERIES, ISOBE MOCHI
LEAST FAVORITE THINGS:
RAW MEAT AND THE LIKE
SPECIAL ABILITIES: PLASTIC MODELS AND DO-IT-YOURSELF FIGURE KITS

TRANSLATION NOTES

OVERALL

Japanese Buddhism has a complex ranking system for its monks called *soukan* (*sou* meaning "monk," and *kan* implying hierarchy). Monks in this story often address each other by rank.

PAGE 205

Aya is Meiji Dairies' premium line of ice cream and a competitor to Häagen-Dazs.

PAGE 207

Hoichi the Earless is the titular character from a Japanese horror tale. Hoichi's entire body—except for his ears—is painted with the text of a sutra, meant to protect him from the spirit of a samurai. The spirit comes across Hoichi and can only detect his exposed ears, which he then rips off. In the "Corpse Princess" oneshot, Itsuki's guns remind Takamasa of the sutra-covered Hoichi.

CORPSE PRINCESS 9

Yoshiichi Akahito

Translation: Caleb D. Cook
Lettering: Bianca Pistillo

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

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